

Fall 2008 Issue 7

MONSTER MAYHEM!

KOBOLD

Quarterly

Kobold Ftagn, la la!

Monsters of

PATHFINDER CHRONICLES

The Black Art of the

UNDEAD

Interview with

SANDY PETERSEN

Horrors of

STEAM & IRON

Guide to

DWARVEN AIRSHIPS

Ecology of the Centaur / Gunpowder Mystics / Plagues and Epidemics
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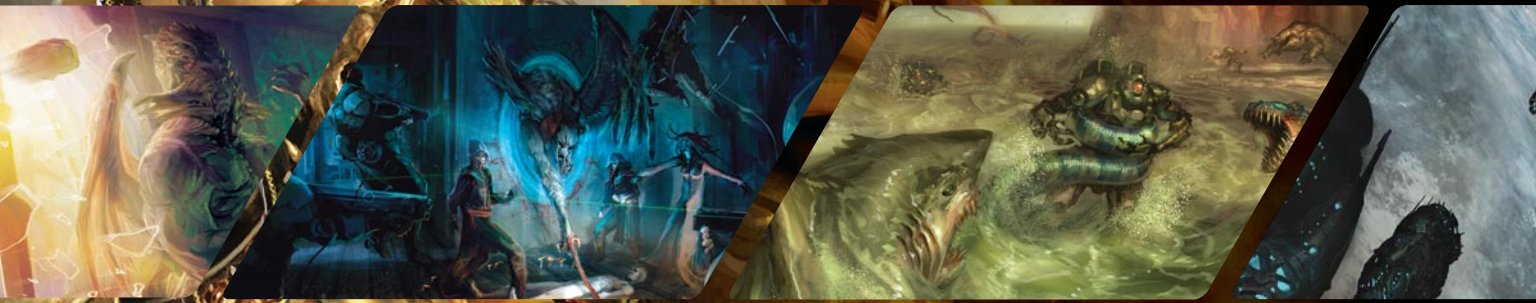
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Fair Games & Fun Ones

It may be a bit of an odd confession for a game designer, but I've always found that having a great set of mechanics is not enough to keep your players happy. You also need a great setting, and you need a great story, or it's just not worth it. Players will forgive you for bad mechanics much faster than they forgive a boring plot or a dumb setting.

Let me speak in defense of rules first. The rules of a game exist to provide a sense of fairness to play. If baseball or chess rules were arbitrary or favored the home team, no one would play. Both sides in a competitive game must feel they have an fair chance of winning.

That's not actually an argument in favor of strong rules in RPGs, of course. There's no fairness between the DM and the players; the DM does control the environment, the monsters, and the NPCs. He could wipe the party out with a TPK rather easily and at any time. Despite many efforts to teach DMs to "play fair" with the players at the table... Well, killer DMs still exist, and even good DMs fudge die rolls both in player's favor and against it (I am certainly guilty as charged, especially at conventions).

So, why don't great rules make for great entertainment in RPGs? Why aren't great rules enough?

The White Wolf folks had it right when they called their games the Storyteller system. All games are entertainment, and RPGs more than most depend just as much on story as they do on competition. "Competitive RPG" is right up there with "jumbo shrimp" and "friendly fire" in the Oxymoron Hall of Fame. Rules foster competition, but there's no real competition in RPGs.

Now, RPGs do provide a shared sense of heroism and achievement. Who hasn't been thrilled to slay a dragon or an arch-devil? But it's not as if the DM is secretly hoping for a TPK every week. The DM is entertained when his adventure makes the players sweat it out, but they find a way to overcome everything he throws at them.

And in that sense, every DM is a game designer. His role is to keep others entertained on game night; building

the world, spinning up a plot, and hatching some monsters for new and deadly challenges is the DM's joy, and hearing cries of dismay is sweet music. But really, he wants the heroes to triumph and their story to grow his shared world.

Now it's possible for a bad set of rules to get in the way of having a good time on game night. Good mechanics are like good editing, or good layout: you don't notice them, they have done their job.

When rules and mechanics hog the spotlight, they have failed. They are no longer enabling roleplayers to get on with having a good time. Instead, those rules become the entertainment for rules hounds and power gamers to bend and twist to suit themselves. And everyone else wonders why they bother with RPGs when they could be playing board games or reading a decent book.

So, what's my point here?

Just as *KOBOLD QUARTERLY* strives to entertain with articles that inspire players and DMs alike, we hope you take a step back to appreciate the part of the game that isn't about the dice so much. (I know, I know, but the dice are so shiny!). It's about having a good time as much as it is about mastering the rules and finding the loopholds. The rule that should be engraved on every DM screen is "If you're the only one having fun, you're doing it wrong". The equivalent for players is simple: "If you are more worried about your stats than your character's goals, you're doing it wrong."

I just know I'm going to get mail telling me I've got it wrong. But tell me what you think! Are rules really the most important element of a game session? Would sword & sorcery without the world's most popular set of mechanics still be great?

Direct your couriers, *message* spells, sealed letters, and email to letters@koboldquarterly.com or to Kobold Letters, PO Box 2811, Kirkland, WA 98083.



Wolfgang Baur
Kobold in Chief

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From the Mines

Dispatches and Complaints

Hurrah, Not Too Angry

I've just read my first issue of KQ - issue 6 - and loved it, you'll definitely be getting a subscription from me. David Cook's article on Tieflings was quite enjoyable, without going into the "I'm an angry race" theme that the tiefling is typically dragged into.

The standout article to me, has got to be the "Ecology of the Phantom Fungus." It's a monster that I typically avoid having anything to do with, and that article convinced me in one read to base a section of my upcoming campaign around it.

But I put 4E or not 4E in the subject line, and you may be thinking: what does that have anything to do with it? My upcoming campaign will be a 4E campaign. It really doesn't matter which way KQ goes - continuing to support 3E, or supporting 4E - as long as you're publishing articles that are this enjoyable.

-David Knight

Thanks, that's the approach we're hoping to continue this issue, with both PATHFINDER and 4E content in the same set of pages. We'll know soon enough if that flies.

4E Support Right Here!

You said you wanted the 4e supporters to write in, and, well, I'm one. I pretty much wasn't playing three months ago; now, with 4th out, I'm DMing two new campaigns and playing in another. I'd like to see your stuff in Fourth.

The idea of having both 3rd and 4th stats for the same content would have been great, but apparently that's not allowed, which is kind of jerky. And like

some subscribers have said, 4th players have plenty of support elsewhere. So I wouldn't mind all that much if you stuck with 3.5.

Maybe try to give some hints to help me stat things up for 4th, without getting yourself in license-related trouble.

-James Geluso
Bakersfield, Calif.

The magazine is going out on a bit of a limb this issue, with 4E material that our lawyers tell us is permissible under US copyright law. Overall, though, I think we're more likely to cover 3E and Pathfinder material than 4E material, unless we get a lot of requests and queries for the newer edition.

I'm still waiting on the new GSL. If that allows for more 4E content, I'll be happy to provide some. As you point out, though, there's just no way that a small (but fierce!) magazine like KQ can take on WotC.

Disappointed by Edition Wars

I read the letters in the most recent KOBOLD QUARTERLY and was disappointed to see the edition warriors at work. I play and enjoy both 3.5 and 4th editions. 4th may lack some of the simulationist feeling of 3rd, but people who play it have fun. It has the biggest tabletop rpg company in the world behind it. 4e is designed to be easily entered into by a novice while 3.5 will be the province of highly experienced gamers unwilling to give up their style of play. Which one of these styles do you think is likely to grow and which one is likely to shrink slowly?

I hope Mr. Baur chooses to publish articles for both editions of the game.



I would imagine that there would be more 4th and less 3rd as time goes by. Whatever he does I will continue to support the magazine. If I use the idea of a crab diviner in my 4e campaign, it will take 2 minutes to convert over to a mechanic that works in the new system. The important part, the creative awesomeness, is edition-proof. So stop threatening to cancel your subscriptions and embrace having two good versions of a great game.

-Thom Little
Nashville, Tennessee

While nobody loves the edition wars, the magazine needs to find a way to please both sides (a tough gig). It seems that the editions have polarized the community, and players who enjoy both editions are rare.

Getting with the Times

I'm writing you in response to your request for letters from 4E supporters. I subscribed to KQ for its first year, assuming it would convert to 4E upon the new edition's release. When I learned this wasn't going to happen, I declined to renew my subscription. I did the same with PATHFINDER. While I enjoyed both publications, I am excited about 4E and not content to dwell in the past indefinitely.

So, I would be pleasantly surprised if KQ got with the times and converted. It's nice to have a real paper magazine dedicated to my favorite hobby. Since KQ and Paizo seem joined at the hip,

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I don't anticipate this happening anytime soon, but there you go.

-Keoki Young

Thanks for your take on it, Keoki! We figured we would convert to 4E as well, and when we learned that was not possible, we declined to go whole-hog in supporting it.

We're not exactly dwelling in the past, but taking the best elements of it and the best of the new, as you can see this very issue.

Backpedaling e-Dragon?

I saw in the recent issue of KOBOLD QUARTERLY that you asked 4E supporters to send in letters. Since I never considered sending in a letter of support one way or another before I thought it might be good to do so now.

I see that WotC has decided to backpedal on the GSL and have adopted a more collegial tone with third party publishers, but don't fall for it. WotC may need the third party support, but 3.5 and PATHFINDER players deserve a quality magazine like KOBOLD QUARTERLY to support their games. 4E players have e-Dragon and e-Dungeon.

- Mark Gedak

As witnessed by our first official PATHFINDER content and our 4E Ecology material, KQ is happy to work both sides of the fence this issue. We'll see if that continues after the new GSL arrives, but for now, we're all for a dual track.

These Are Non-Issues

Great job on a lovely new gaming magazine! It's such a nice feeling to have something tangible in your hands to read, rather than reading from a screen. I know I'm not alone in feeling this way, nor would I be first to comment on the importance of smell (either new game, or aging tome). To me these things are an important part of the roleplaying experience.

I'm still evaluating the 4th Edition game really, having only played a few month's worth of sessions. My initial thoughts are that this version is trying to bridge the gap between pen & paper

and online gaming, or at least trying to draw the new crowds in from the more successful electronic counterparts. The mechanics seems much more coin operated — healing surges feel like pumping in fresh quarters and magic feels almost too accessible, with so much of it being blasted around that it feels almost mundane. If I was going to write a pen & paper version of *Gauntlet* this is how I'd go about it.

I understand the rationale of giving characters more options and things to do each round, but never really saw this as a problem. For example, the previous imbalance of a fighter being more powerful than a wizard in early levels was naturally remedied when the roles were reversed in later on.

Of course all these issues are really non-issues. RPGs have always fundamentally been what you make of them. The point I'm really trying to make is that great adventures and great stories make great roleplaying, and nothing about this is really mechanics driven. Mechanics *almost* seem less important that well referenced and indexed work.

I think it's more important to have a quality magazine out at the moment than arguments over specific editions and contents. I don't play previous editions at the moment but am more than willing to buy a magazine that covers them because it's still a wealth of source material and ideas. It's a real treat just to read something like KOBOLD QUARTERLY and I will continue to pick it up, wherever your dice fall, but I'm really hoping that you'll keep the print version around for a long time yet!

-Dan Barton

Thanks, Dan! I think we're done with our Edition Wars discussion here in the letters pages, but we agree that RPGs are really what you make of them. KQ will continue to support the world's most popular roleplaying games, in any edition.

Call for Demi-Humans

I am stationed in Iraq and only a few hours ago I happened to come across your new issue in the PX. I love your magazine already and would like to thank you, as it has given me some details and some ideas for my own ongoing game, which I have already begun to work into the storyline.

Also, I was wondering if anyone has some insight as to how to set up demi-human characters without them seeming overly powerful. I myself often play a Kitsune-Bito (Japanese fox folk) when I'm not the DM, and often bump heads with other DMs about my character and abilities. Not to mention that I know about a dozen players who would like to create demi-human characters but don't really have anything to use for guidance, other than a standard halfling template.

SPC. Hetherington, Pat
United States Army

Thanks for your email, and I think I smell a challenge to the freelancers out there. Anyone want to give demi-humans like the kitsune a set of parameters?

Serious Comics

KQ#2 was another issue well worth the cover price. I'll keep buying them for sure.

Regarding your solicitation for a full page comic, why not get something that has more of serious feel to it? Something like a Prince Valiant for gaming. I read plenty of "funny" comics in this genre, but none that are in a serious storytelling vein. I know it would only come out 4 times a year but it could still be done. Do we really need another goof-ball comic that semi makes fun of gaming? I would like to read some serious serial fiction in the genre instead.

-Tom Cibelli

We're still looking for a full-page comic, but you make a good point. There's a lot of great humor strips out there. Is there anyone who knows of a more serious comic about gaming and sword-and-sorcery fantasy? Let us know!



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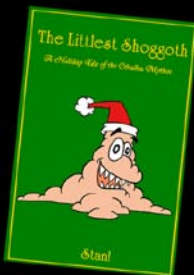
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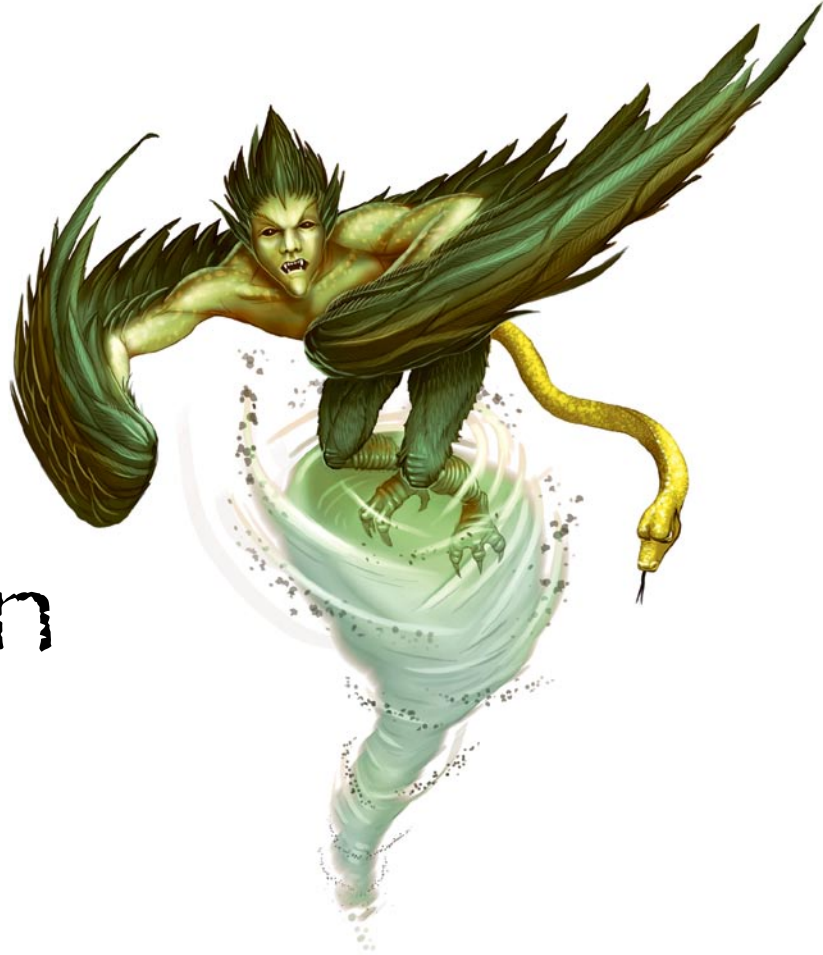
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PATHFINDER CHRONICLES

Monsters of Osirion



by Phillip Larwood

Art by Michael Jaacks

Nethys was once of a single mind, but he saw into the Great Beyond and his mind fragmented, trying to encompass all that he witnessed. From out of the roiling chaos that were his thoughts, two minds emerged with one dedicated to the principles of arcane magic and the other to the perversion of its fundamental laws. None can say which mind is the greater or which will triumph, but when Nethys emerged from his sanctuary, the study of magic became a constant balancing act between the two.

—Harkhoun the Mighty, in
The Tenets of Magic

A land of ancient mysteries, living god-kings, and powerful sorceries, Osirion is the birthplace of many of the creatures found throughout Golarion. Yet while withered mummies and regal sphinxes are both readily associated with the Inner Sea's oldest kingdom, other creatures prowl the searing deserts or lurk in the mysterious peaks as well—creatures born of magic and nature and even the will of the gods.

These creatures range from the dreaded asakku, spirits of air given fleshy form that drive men mad with their winds; to the deathtrap ooze and the sandwalker, two quite different creatures born from the twisted minds of Osirion's artisan-wizards to guard noble tombs and pharaonic pyramids. Finally, there comes the torthune, a creature that serves Nethys in the Great Beyond and exemplifies the dueling aspects of the god of magic.

Asakku

Accompanied by an eerie howling wind is a creature of rusty black feathers with the face of a beautiful, androgynous humanoid. Vast wings like those of a vulture sprout from where its arms should be while a yellow asp emerges from its back as a tail, whipping about with frenetic abandon. The creature's eyes are as black as a moonless night and utterly bereft of compassion, and its taloned feet are stained with the blood of countless shredded corpses.

Dwelling in Osirion's barren mountains, asakku are a race of savage and reclusive outsiders originally from the Great Beyond. At some point after the starstone created the Inner Sea and bathed the world in darkness they left their home plane and arrived on Golarion, setting aside their wind-like forms and adopting a form of flesh and feathers in mockery of the world's birds.

Tormentors of mind and body, asakku revel in performing foul and despicable acts, driving men insane with their maddening winds, and pulling apart victims' bodies with their wicked claws. These irredeemable qualities have drawn the attention of Pazuzu and other paragons of evil, and have earned the asakku a dreadful reputation.

Asakku

CR 7

Always CE Medium outsider (native)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Spot** +15, **Listen** +15

Aura deflecting winds, maddening winds

DEFENSE

AC 19; touch 13, flat-footed 16

(+3 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 60 (8d8+24)

Fort +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +8

DR 5/good, **Resist** cold 10, fire 10, **SR** 17

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 70 ft. (good)

Melee 2 claws +11 (1d6+3) and

tail +9 (1d4+1 plus poisonous lash)

Special Attacks poisonous lash, summon elemental

TACTICS

Before Combat An asakku takes to the air if possible, using its deflecting winds aura to make normal ranged attacks against it difficult. Asakku aeries will collectively summon one or more air elementals to attack their foes.

During Combat An asakku lets its maddening aura take hold of the minds of its opponents while staying out of melee combat. Once all of its opponents are affected by its aura, it attacks with its claws and tail, hoping to incapacitate them with its mind-numbing poison.

Morale An asakku typically flees when reduced to less than 15 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 19, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +11

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claw)^B, Multiattack

Skills Bluff +16, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (nature) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Listen +15, Sense Motive +13, Spot +15, Survival +13 (+15 above ground or on other planes)

Languages Abyssal and Common (or a regional language such as Osiriani)

ECOLOGY

Environment tropical mountains and hills

Organization solitary or aerie (2–12)

Treasure standard

Advancement by character class (sorcerer or rogue)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Deflecting winds (Su) An asakku is constantly surrounded by a maelstrom of buffeting winds. Anyone making a ranged attack against an asakku takes a –8 penalty to his or her attack rolls. An asakku can dismiss or resume its aura as a free action.

Maddening winds (Su) Creatures within a 30-foot radius of an asakku are assaulted by a vortex of maddening wind. Any creature listening to the strains of this wind must make a DC 19 Will save or take 1d4 points of Wisdom damage. A new save must be made every round that a creature remains within the radius, but a successful save renders a creature immune to the wind's effects for 24 hours.

A creature reduced to 0 Wisdom slips into a comatose-like nightmare from which it cannot awaken. An asakku can dismiss or resume its aura as a free action. Maddening winds is a sonic mind-affecting effect to which deaf creatures and other asakku are immune. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Poisonous Lash (Su) The asp-like tail of an asakku is coated with powerful supernatural venom that it can deliver with a strike: injury, Fortitude DC 18, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Intelligence. Creatures affected by this poison appear feverish and can't focus their thoughts. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Summon Elemental (Sp) Once per day, a group of three or more asakku can spend a full-round action to summon a NE large air elemental with maximum hit points and a +2 morale bonus to attack and damage rolls. This ability is equivalent to a 9th-level spell and the asakku must be within 30 feet of each other to use it

Ecology

Like most outsiders, asakku have no need to eat or sleep, yet they enjoy the taste of flesh and blood and dine on such fare whenever possible. While they have no natural place in the world, they are slowly becoming an apex predator in the mountainous regions of Osirion, Katapesh, Rahadoum, and Thuvia; fighting over territory with griffons, manticores, and sphinxes; and keeping the number of savage humanoids in the highlands in check.

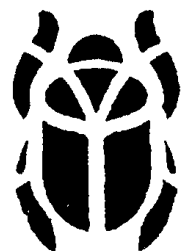
While they are often mistaken for harpies, asakku hate the comparison and go out of their way to destroy anyone who makes such a statement as well as any harpy they encounter. As such, harpies are one of the few evil flying creatures asakku won't willingly associate with. Some believe that the harpy colony at Al-Bashir was first formed to provide the harpies safety in numbers against asakku.

A typical asakku is 6 feet tall and weighs 120 pounds.

Habitat & Society

Asakku are petty, squabbling, selfish creatures, yet they are more likely to be found in aeries of 6–12 members than alone. While asakku hate one another and battles for dominance are common, they have a better chance of fending off attacks when in a group and can secure better holdings, such as keeps and townhouses, which are inevitably fouled and ruined by their presence.

Asakku often work with demons such as vlocks and hideous flying monsters such as kuchrima or gargoyles when the pay is reasonable and they get the chance to spill blood. They are also one of the favored servants of Pazuzu, allying with cultists of the demon prince to commit acts of atrocity throughout the desert lands.





Deathtrap Ooze

Falling from the ceiling, a deadly scything blade is connected to a long stone beam. Even as it strikes, the trap undergoes a startling transformation, melting and shifting until it collapses altogether in a puddle of glistening, viscous orange goop.

Created during Osirion's First Age by wizards using captured ochre jellies, deathtrap oozes were designed to protect burial chambers and other secure areas. Their unique abilities allow them to remain sealed in these areas for hundreds of years, hibernating in trap form until they sense an intruder.

Deathtrap Ooze

CR 8

Always N Large ooze

Init -5; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; **Spot** +0, **Listen** +0

DEFENSE

AC 4, **touch** 4, **flat-footed** 4

(-1 size, -5 Dex)

hp 112 (9d10+63)

Fort +10, **Ref** -2, **Will** -2

Immune critical hits, flanking, gaze attacks, illusions, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, polymorph, sleep, stunning

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., **climb** 20 ft.

Melee slam +9 (2d6+6 plus 1d6 acid)

Special Attacks acid, constrict, improved grab, trap form

TACTICS

Before Combat A deathtrap ooze hides in trap form until it strikes, often remaining in trap form until a creature tries to disable it.

During Combat A deathtrap ooze lashes out in trap form then reverts to its normal form, grabbing and crushing foes until they are dead.

Morale A deathtrap ooze fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 1, **Con** 24, **Int** —, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +14

Feats Improved Natural Attack (slam)^B

Skills —

Languages none

ECOLOGY

Environment any (typically tombs)

Organization solitary

Treasure none

Advancement 10–12 HD (Large); 13–21 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Acid (Ex) The acid of a deathtrap ooze is identical to that of an ochre jelly and dissolves only flesh. Any melee hit or constrict attack deals acid damage.

Constrict (Ex) A deathtrap ooze deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a deathtrap ooze must hit with a slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Trap Form (Ex) A deathtrap ooze can take the form of a Medium or Large size trap. The trap must be mechanical in nature and have no more than a single moving part. Typical traps include scything blades, piercing rods, and solid blocks of crushing stone. While in trap form, a deathtrap ooze is indistinguishable from the trap it is emulating and uses the statistics of a typical trap of its kind, including hardness and the Search DC to locate it. It retains its own attack bonus but deals damage typical of the trap it is disguised as (such as 2d8 for a scything blade).

If a creature searching for traps succeeds on the check to locate the deathtrap ooze by 10 or more he can determine that the trap is somehow different from normal and can make a DC 19 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check (if he possesses the skill) to identify the trap as a deathtrap ooze.

As soon as a deathtrap ooze takes any damage in trap form it loses cohesion and reverts to its normal form. Assuming trap form takes 1 minute, while resuming ooze form is a move action. While in trap form a deathtrap ooze can hibernate indefinitely.

Ecology

A deathtrap ooze is an ambush predator that can stay in the same location for days or even years waiting for their next meal. Because of its unique abilities, a deathtrap ooze is generally not found in natural aboveground locations and does not move around as other oozes do. When forced to do so, it hunts in much the same manner as an ochre jelly, but it takes trap form when at rest.

A deathtrap ooze appears as a particularly large, dark-col-

ored ochre jelly or a Medium or Large mechanical trap made out of wood or stone. A given deathtrap ooze will always assume the same type of trap.

Habitat & Society

Many creatures use deathtrap oozes as guardians in place of regular oozes because of their propensity for staying in one location and for doubling as traps. As such, deathtrap oozes are gradually spreading beyond the tombs of Osirian nobles and can now be found throughout southern Golarion.

Sandwalker

Scuttling forward is a monstrous apparition the size of an elephant. Four grasping claws reach forward to grapple prey while two gleaming stingers emerge from its back. Dark black spots serve as the creature's eyes, and its mouthparts quiver in anticipation of a coming meal. It might have once been a scorpion, but now it is something far worse.

Sandwalkers were originally created from monstrous scorpions by Osirian mages during the Second Age. The armies of ancient Osirion used the monsters as elite shock troops and gladiatorial beasts, but their burrowing ability and sheer size made them difficult both to keep and maintain. At some point toward the end of the Second Age, several sandwalkers escaped into the wilds and have since spread throughout the desert, terrorizing travelers and butchering pack animals.

Sandwalker

CR 11

Usually NE Huge magical beast

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +7

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 9, flat-footed 23

(-2 size, +1 Dex, +15 natural)

hp 126 (12d10+60)

Fort +13, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., burrow 20 ft.

Melee 4 claws +18 (2d6+8) and

2 stings +16 (1d8+4 plus poison)

Special Attacks constrict, improved grab, poison, sand wave

TACTICS

Before Combat A sandwalker normally begins combat buried below the sand, erupting to attack when it senses a Medium-size or bigger creature with its tremorsense ability.

During Combat A sandwalker uses its claws to pin and crush foes and its stingers to poison them. If surrounded by a large group of foes or severely injured, it uses its sand wave ability.

Morale A sandwalker fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 12, **Con** 20, **Int** 5, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +28

Feats Ability Focus (poison), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claw)B, Multiattack, Stealthy

Skills Climb +15, Hide +3 (+15 when buried beneath the sand), Listen +3, Move Silently +7, Spot +7



Languages none (but can understand Common or Osiriani)

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate and tropical deserts

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

Advancement 13–24 HD (Huge); 25–36 HD (Gargantuan)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Constrict (Ex) A sandwalker deals automatic claw damage with a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a sandwalker must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Poison (Ex) Sandwalkers can poison foes with their wicked stingers: injury, Fortitude DC 23, initial and secondary damage 1d6+1 Con. The saving throw is Constitution-based and includes a +2 bonus from the Ability Focus feat.

Sand Wave (Su) Once per hour, a sandwalker can focus its tremorsense ability outwards in a 20-foot radius blast of sonic energy that travels through the ground. The blast deals 8d6 sonic damage and creatures in the area are knocked prone. A DC 21 Reflex save halves the damage and prevents creatures from falling over. In sandy regions the sand wave visibly ripples the sand, forming miniature waves that expand outward from the sandwalker's body. The save DC for this ability is Constitution-based.

Skills (Ex) A sandwalker gains a +4 racial bonus on Climb, Hide, and Spot checks. While buried below the sand, its Hide bonus increases to +16.

Ecology

Sandwalkers are still fairly rare throughout the deep deserts of Osirion, Thuvia, Rahadoum, and Qadira, but in recent times they have increased in numbers. Sandwalkers favor loose soil or sand, which they dig through to hide themselves from potential prey. They ignore lone humanoids unless hungry but relish the taste of horses and camels, and they have been known to demolish campsites to devour every pack animal present.

Although they do not like the taste of humanoids, sandwalkers are malicious and kill intelligent creatures for the sheer joy of it. In these cases, they leave the corpses for jackals and giant ants to feast on.

Brass dragons view sandwalkers as delicacies, and wyrm and great wyrm brass dragons will burrow into the desert sands to extract them from their burrows.

A typical sandwalker resembles a giant scorpion with four claws and two stingers. It is drab yellow or pale red in color and over 30 feet long. It weighs more than 20,000 pounds.

Habitat & Society

Sandwalkers are solitary creatures and have the same breeding habits as monstrous scorpions. While they are generally violent towards other creatures (including others of their own kind), they have been known to strike up bargains with savage humanoids and other creatures that can provide them with camels and horses.

Sandwalkers drag their meals down into the deep burrows where they dwell. Often the pack animals they drag into their burrows carry treasure, either from merchant caravans or passing travelers such as adventurers and pilgrims.

Torthune

Flying silently through the air is a tall lean humanoid figure of grayish flesh with long thin arms. A featureless ovoid serves as the creature's head while a large golden eye stares out from the center of its chest, the orb glowing with pale amber light.

When disassembled, a torthune appears rather different.

A swirling jumble of body parts hurtles through the air, the parts forming a chaotic scramble of bits and pieces that look like they could be reassembled given enough time. Floating in the center of this mass of gray body parts is a large golden orb that glows with pale yellow light. The sphere looks around constantly like a giant roving eye.

The torthune are a race of bizarre outsiders that hail from the Great Beyond and serve Nethys. Like Nethys, the torthune have two sides represented by their forms. In their reassembled forms, the torthune are calm and calculating creatures that safeguard magical lore and protect magical sites from harm. In their disassembled forms, the torthune become violent and unpredictable and more often than not use their powers to destroy magical works and spellcasters.



Torthune

CR 12

Always N Medium outsider

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., true seeing; Listen +21, Spot +29

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 21; 20% miss chance when disassembled (blur)

(+4 Dex, +11 natural)

hp 147 (14d8+84)

Fort +15, **Ref** +13, **Will** +13

DR 10/adamantine and magic; **Immune** critical hits, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10, sonic 10; **SR** 25

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 slams +16 (1d8+2 plus 3d6 disincorporating touch)

Special Attacks disincorporating touch, eye of power

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th)

At will—*invisibility*, *shield*

3/day—*baleful polymorph* (DC 20), *magic missile*, *minor*

globe of invulnerability, *plane shift*, *quickened dispel magic*

1/day—*delayed blast fireball* (DC 22), *legend lore*, *spell turning*

TACTICS

Before Combat A torthune uses *invisibility*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *shield*, and *spell turning* on itself before combat and relies on its all-seeing gaze to scout out the battlefield.

During Combat A torthune typically leads off with a *quicken dispel magic* and *delayed blast fireball* before resorting to its other spell-like abilities. When reduced to half hit points or when it fails a Concentration check, it disassembles and uses its eye of power until all its opponents are destroyed or scattered, mopping up those who survive with its disincorporating touch.

Morale A torthune ordered to protect a site or creature by Nethys fights to the death, otherwise it flees via flight or plane shift once reduced to less than 30 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 18, **Con** 23, **Int** 23, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +14; **Grp** +16

Feats Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell-like Ability (*dispel magic*)

Skills Bluff +22, Concentration +23, Diplomacy +26, Gather Information +22, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (history) +23, Knowledge (religion) +23, Knowledge (the planes) +23, Listen +21, Search +22, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +25, Spot +29

Languages telepathy 100 ft. (torthune cannot speak)

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure none

Advancement 15–33 HD (Medium); 34–52 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

All-Seeing Gaze (Su) A torthune has 120 ft. darkvision and sees as if under the effects of a permanent *true seeing* spell. A torthune also gains a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks. A torthune's vision cannot be affected by *dispel magic*, but it loses its true seeing ability when in an antimagic field or similar effect.

Blur (Su) A disassembled torthune's constantly revolving form makes it difficult to target with attacks. Attacks against a disassembled torthune suffer a 20% miss chance.

Disincorporating Touch (Su) A strike from the torthune's fists or body vaporizes an opponent's flesh; blood, flesh, and muscles separate into their component parts in a form of rough disintegration. This attack inflicts 3d6 damage, though a successful DC 23 Fortitude save halves the damage. The save is Constitution-based.

Eye of Power (Su) Once every 4 rounds, a disassembled torthune can unleash a devastating blast of magical energy that warps time and space in the vicinity, potentially withering and transporting foes against their will. This blast of choral and magical energy takes the form of a 60 ft. cone and deals 10d6 damage. Creatures and loose objects in the path of the cone are also teleported 10d10 feet away from their starting positions in a random direction. A DC 22 Reflex save halves the damage and negates the random teleporting effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Immunity to Critical Hits (Ex) While disassembled a torthune is immune to critical hits. Against a reassembled torthune a critical hit does no harm other than to force it to immediately disassemble.

Magical Flight (Su) A torthune's flight is magical but cannot be dispelled. It does not function in an antimagic field or similar area.

Reassemble (Su) As a move action, a torthune that succeeds on a DC 30 Concentration check can reassemble its disparate parts and regain its true form. If it succeeds it loses its blur and eye of power abilities but gains access to its spell-like abilities. Every round that a torthune wishes to stay assembled it must make a DC 25 Concentration check at the start of its round (this counts as a free action).

Torthune constantly struggle against the chaotic magical forces seeking to tear them asunder but sometimes find it expedient to unleash the fury that lurks within their disassembled forms. When not rushed or threatened a torthune usually takes 10 on its Concentration checks to maintain its reassembled form.

Ecology

When Nethys turned his attention to the world of Golarion, he forged an entire race of living constructs, enigmatic and inscrutable agents known as the torthune, to serve his every whim. The torthune guarded his sanctums and temples as well as the magical artifacts he had accumulated during his travels.

When Nethys was exposed to the madness of the void his close connection to the torthune forced a radical metamorphosis on them. In that moment they became outsiders and their bodies were torn apart. Only after Nethys balanced the two sides of his personality did the torthune regain their forms, and like their master, they struggle against the chaos and fury seeking to overwhelm them every day.

Torthune have no mouths and do not need to breathe, eat, or sleep. They communicate solely through telepathy, their voices monotonous while reassembled and constantly shifting in volume and tone while disassembled.

Habitat & Society

Torthune live in isolation and have no society to speak of. They are rarely encountered together unless guarding an important magical location or artifact and do not communicate with one another except by necessity.

A torthune is normally found in its reassembled form unless unconscious or otherwise disabled. Most torthune are embarrassed by their disassembled forms and do not willingly disassemble themselves except during battle.

An unusual sect of torthune known as the Conclave of the Eye lives in an eye-studded tower in the Barrier Mountains above Osirion. These torthune wear long black and white robes in homage to Nethys and are thought to watch over the use of magic in Golarion for their master (though they almost never act to stop anything they witness). They are also thought to possess abilities unusual among their race, including the ability to cast spells.



Horrors of Iron & Steam



Flesh is Weak & Iron Relentless

By Richard Pett

Art by Pat Loboyko

'Ashen faced, she watched as the creature ripped her screaming brother apart; unyielding iron tearing weak flesh, machinery following its instruction mindlessly—like a waterwheel obeying the force of water. Having completed its first instruction, the iron golem moved toward her with the steady, relentless tread of its kind.'

Campaign settings like a certain pulp lightning train setting, the Iron Kingdoms, and our own Free City of Zobeck allow, or even assume, slightly higher levels of technology than standard fantasy settings. These settings offer a great avenue to explore and populate with creatures a bit beyond the usual, and they allow us to use our imaginations to create twisted, rusted, and stitched things that wander the desolate alleyways and furnaces of these kingdoms. Steampunk books have added to this genre of industrial fantasy.

Such monsters offer a change of pace to standard fantasy campaigns, and the deploying such creatures may give your players a shock—imagine a naga sheathed in iron, a clock-work-faced minotaur or an alchemical-blooded wyvern—even when the mechanics are not wildly different. These familiar base monsters suddenly become new foes, and your players have to deal with their new abilities quickly or face the consequences.

Standard Monster Variations

The *basic monster books* make a good starting point for many interesting variations on standard fantasy monsters. You do not need to make sweeping changes to those complex stat blocks to enable a monster to be truly different, simply add a flavorsome description and some new powers and you can have, to all intents and purposes, a new monster.

Animated Objects

Animated objects make great steampunk-type (steampunkesque?) monsters; they are essentially an object given life—any object, which comes in handy in many situations. Use your imagination to clothe and arm these animated creatures, such as the following two examples.

The Flailing Spines of Thresk

A gateway carved to resemble an ivy-strangled dragon—its twelve spined tails guard the garden beyond, and the stings they deliver stay in the wound until the limb falls away as rust, its iron barbs impossible to remove.

The Iron Bell of the Storm

This enormous bell plays host to a score of iron spiders, and its steam-powered tolling causes confusion, which its children use to advantage to attack those of the flesh.

The Leastlings

Made entirely of thousands of animated needles, these manlike forms work for the assassin's guild of the Free City, delivering poison on their fingers and with a shake of their head.

Hateful Piston Choker

The asthmatic gasping paused, but I still see nothing in the cavern walls until suddenly a thing lurched from above, I turned to see the twisted face of a choker, its dislocated limbs grasping for me. Now in the light, however, I could see that this thing had a passenger; melted into its back was a hunch of black steel arrayed with ribbed plates.

This variation uses a standard choker with the additions below. The damaged mind that captured the poor creature has grafted an animated object onto its back and forearms, giving the creature incredible strength:

Relentless Constriction (Ex) The creature carries the equivalent of a tiny animated object on its back; this animated object is grafted onto the choker itself and made of steel (hardness 10). The animated object will never leave the choker but can be attacked separately (if so, use the standard tiny object stat block). The object greatly increases the choker's strength (increase the choker's strength to 20 and, accordingly, its Climb skill to +15). The creature's attacks become:

Melee 2 tentacles +8 melee (1d3+5)
Grapple +7

Constrict (Ex) A hateful piston choker deals 1d3+5 points of damage with a successful grapple check against a Large or smaller creature. Because it seizes its victim by the neck, a creature in the choker's grasp cannot speak or cast spells with verbal components.

If the animated object has not been destroyed, any grappled creature is still subject to attack after the choker is reduced to 0 hit points or less. The constrict attack continues but is reduced to +2 and delivers only 1d3+2 damage.

Once a victim escapes a grapple with a hateful piston choker that has been reduced to 0 hit points, the creature's attacks cease.

If the construct is destroyed, the creature reverts to a standard choker. Award the CR of both creatures if they are destroyed.

Furnace Gargoyle

The two amber eyes blinked in the dark from across the pool. Suddenly, I felt a bat arc past me, glancing upward. When I looked back across the holy pool, the eyes had gone.

I think my next sensation was one of touch—a feeling on the back of my neck as the hairs rose and I realized that I had underestimated the creature with amber eyes. I turned just as the creature attacked—its mouth drawn open to reveal an inner blaze of white-hot fire, its limbs wrapped in tight steel bonds.

Using a standard gargoyle as a base, this creature simply adds two additional powers to the original, and as a result, increases its CR to 6.

White-hot bite (Ex) The bite of the Furnace Gargoyle deals an additional 1d6 fire damage with each successful hit.

Cage exoskeleton (Ex) The steel tattoo armor of the furnace gargoyle acts as banded mail armor, giving the gargoyle AC 21 (+1 Dex, +4 natural, +6 armor). As a result, the gargoyle's fly speed is reduced, and its ability to perform maneuvers whilst flying is hampered—it now has fly 40 ft. (poor).

Golems

Golems make perfect steampunk monsters. With simple alterations, even standard golems can become something memorable. The golem itself is simply a framework that holds the abilities and elements that make a satisfying monster.

The Weeping Man

The scarecrow in the field at the top of the hill has been there for centuries—never moving, never changing. Local

children dare each other to touch the thing.

The Weeping Man is a flesh golem bound in copper twine and lashed to a great copper rod engraved with leaping quicklings. He stands as mute guardian above the Barrow of the Callous King. Sometimes his endless wait wearies him, and he sobs quietly to himself in the rain.

The body and laboratory of the Callous King lies in rest beneath the innocuous fields, protected from storms by the Weeping Man. The Callous King, a lich, is awaiting a time when the stars are right to begin his true quest—the unmaking of all things using its Engine of Decay, a machine it created centuries ago...

The Betraying Timepiece of Valash

The timepiece is vast; it sits at the heart of the great Umorelis Cathedral and remorselessly calls out the time. Half a dozen black figures of knights—their gilt and jewels hidden beneath centuries of pigeon dirt—patrol in a tight circle in the cathedral, slowly rising from the ground floor on cogged platforms on a great iron rail to reach the spire at midnight and descend again.

The interior of the cathedral is a vast cobweb of brass and steel and clockwork cogs. Planets, stars, and impossible creatures from beyond race across these heavens—some battle the knights, others aid them on their way to heaven. Heaven appears in an incredible ceiling mural painted by Grecan and which shows Heaven as a vast cornucopian land the knights reach daily. Some claim to have seen holy men climb up into the painting and vanish.

The Timepiece is no mere clock, however; it is the defense mechanism for the city itself. The knights are iron golems, and the iron angels, stars, and impossible creatures are animated objects held in temporary sleep. All the objects will animate to defend the city if it is in need. The secret codex detailing this defense is literally hidden within the stars and objects within the cathedral itself and was known only by



the holy fathers who ruled the city and who passed the secret from mouth to mouth.

Tragically, the line was broken five centuries ago when assassination killed the secret and its keeper.

The secret was lost until today, when it fell into the wrong hands. An insane archon and its ice devil master have unlocked the riddle. The “defenders” stir, and the final chimes will soon ring for the city...

Scything Mohrg

The thing on the gable came from nowhere, becoming visible at the last moment and taking the three boys in the square below by surprise. The boys screamed, and a dreadful screaming choir of children’s heads wailed in answer from the creature itself—the heads of the killer’s poor victims were slung about the rotting waist of the mohrg itself.

A great scythe swung from a huge, insectoid iron arm grafted onto its back. There was something golem-like about the thing, as though the creature had a sickness of metal that further cursed the things body. Its viscera glowed a hideous orange with the rot of rust from its partly iron frame.

It leapt to the ground and doffed its hat to reveal one final horror — its head wore a crown of nails.

This mohrg, demented by its centuries of confinement beneath the legendary Iron Golem Graveyard, goes by the nickname of the Whispering Cleaver within the city. It hunts purely for pleasure, and children are its chosen prey.

The Cleaver will carefully choose a victim, using its *ring of invisibility* to stalk the rooftops of the city, favoring especially those poorest areas where such infants are more numerous. It beheads the poor infants it slays and has taken to wearing the heads like a grotesque skirt or scarf about its waist. These heads have become spawn of the creature but cannot carry out any physical attacks, they simply sob quietly by day, and scream when the mohrg finds another victim.

They say the Whisperer has the soul of a machine, having shared the nightmares of the dead golems for countless years, and that it carries out its grisly harvest mechanically.

The mohrg fights with its slam and tongue attacks; however, it also has the following extra special attacks, which it uses in any round when it can make a full attack:

Melee slam +12 melee (1d6+7) and tongue +12 melee touch (paralysis) and large scythe +12 (2d6+7)

Beheading Frenzy (Ex) If the creature hits and paralyzes an infant it has been stalking, it will make a coup-de-grace attack upon that child the round after, using its scythe and ignoring any other attacks upon it. If the attack kills the child consider the infant to be beheaded.

Screaming Choir (Su) As soon as the beheaded spawn children see a living child about to be attacked, they begin to wail and scream as a free action. All creatures (other than the mohrg) within a 30-foot spread must succeed on a DC 12 Will save or be affected as though by a *confusion* spell for 1d2 rounds. This is a sonic mind-affecting compulsion effect. The choir cannot affect a creature that successfully saves for 24 hours. The save DC is charisma-based.

Increase the CR of this mohrg to 9.

Gynosphinx—the Caustic Queen

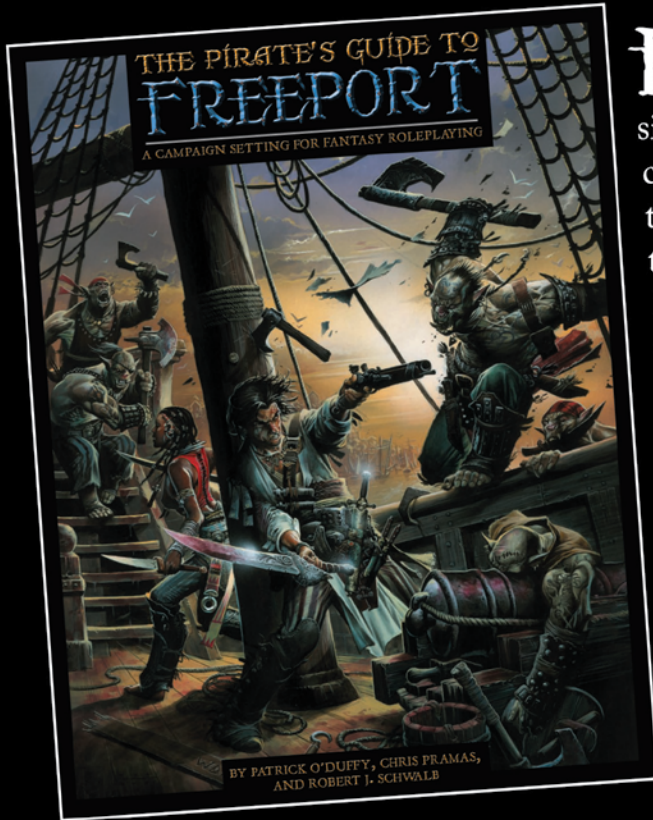
Her once great form was a shadow, an emaciation, a ghost of flesh hung on ancient bones. Her flesh was mangy, gray, and covered in sores, her wings flaccid, bald. Her face sagged with the lines of a thousand thousand years.

She lifted her wings to reveal her children. Feeding at her dozen teats were wasps—millions of angry swollen wasps—their bodies ruptured with the chemicals that spilled from her. The chemicals they fed upon...

The Caustic Queen is beyond ancient. She is as old as the sand and the sun and was legend before the first stone were set upon one another in the cities of men. She has spent her ageless days travelling, seeking knowledge, diversion, amusement, to keep her mind from the torpidity of madness.

She has lived a thousand lives, and countless names follow her—the Caustic Queen, the Witch of the Stinging Swarm, Mistress of Alchemy, Lady of Wasps. She came from the desert in a sandstorm, they say; her children cling to her for protection. She dwells in

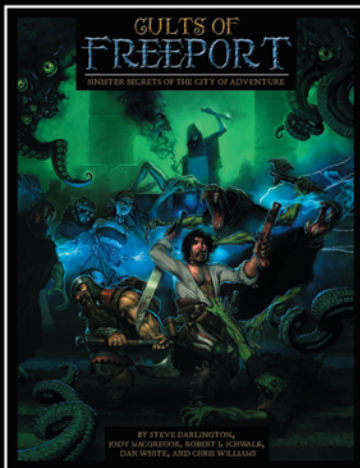
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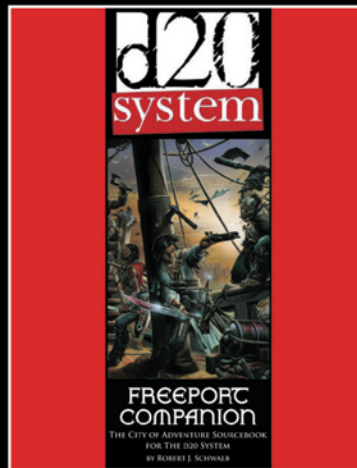
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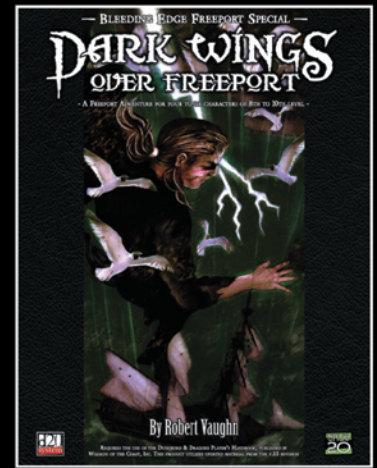
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for 2d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Increase the CR of the gynosphinx to 12 to take into account the Cautic Queen's increased powers and the presence of her children.

New Monsters

Devil, Automata (Castigas)

This creature is slender, almost emaciated. Its skin erupts in barbs and sharp nails and coils of wire, which have been threaded through its flesh. Chains are buried under blisters and scabs. The eyelids—both front and back pairs—of this infernal horror have been sewn back with wire, whilst six arms ending in large grasping hands erupt from its shoulders.

The creature's back is broad and massive and there is something insectoid in its appearance. Its head is a black mass ending in two huge

mandibles. By its side, it carries a huge coiled whip, which squirms like a snake—eager to be used, the whip curls toward the creature's stomach, which opens up like a huge iron vice filled with spines.

There is a corner of Hell known simply as the Forge. Here, black chimneys rise a mile high from a dead land of choking air and red poison hills. The Machine, a greater devil who never sleeps and never lets his subjects know rest, rules this land. His overseers consist of thousands upon thousands of imps who whip and punish the workers. The imps themselves are kept in check by hordes of chain devils, who in turn answer to the automata—the managers of this infernal place. Automata devils are chain devils who have been granted this special reward.

Automata devils are part living machine, part devil. The machine part knows only that toil must never end, and they are merciless in their judgment, wanting only for the Forge to continue. The devil part comes in when punishments need to be created or modified.

CR 11

Always LE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +1; Senses all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Listen +11, Spot +17

Aura fear (5 ft.)

DEFENSE

Armor Class 20, touch 9, flat-footed 20 (+11 natural, -1 size)

the Free City now, a bibliolater—a worshipper of books and alchemy. Her palace is filled with tomes and manuscripts, scripts and journals.

She is a creature of elemental grace, an alchemic thing changed by her worship at the altar of knowledge. Yet there are still those desperate enough, foolish enough, to seek answers to questions that should not be asked, looking for those who worship the Queen and who whisper her name in the night.

The Cautic Queen uses a gynosphinx as a base creature, with the following additional power and set of followers:

Caustic Soul (Ex) Rot runs through the Queen's veins, along with the fire and fury of elemental acid. This blood boils, and if her flesh is cut, her blood bubbles from her. Any creature which makes a successful melee attack on the Queen must make a DC 18 Reflex save or take 2d6 acid damage as the hellish blood spurts from her. Those that fail their save suffer a further 1d6 damage the round after. This damage is doubled if a critical hit is made and if the Queen is reduced to 0 hp by any blow.

The Children A dozen wasp swarms worship the Queen and are with her at all times. Use the standard statistics for a wasp swarm but add the following ability:

Acrid Blindness (Ex) When one of the Queen's swarms takes to the air, all those caught within the swarm must make a further save (in addition to the distraction save) or be struck down choking and retching due to the acidity in the air. The save DC is 11, those that fail are nauseated

hp 95 (10d8+50)

Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +11

DR 10/good; Immune fire, poison; Resist acid 10, fire 10; SR 21

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft.

Melee whip +18/+13/+8 (1d4+4 plus entangle plus demented punishment) and

bite +16 (1d8+9) and

maw +16 (2d6+9)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks demented punishment, entangle, fear aura, punishing embrace, spell-like abilities, summon devil

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; Charisma-based):

At will— *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of object only), *charm person* (DC 13), *suggestion* (DC 15)

1/day— *mind fog* (DC 17), *summon devil*

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Statistics

Str 28, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 14

Base Atk +10; Grapple +23

Feats Alertness, Iron Will, Multiattack, Persuasive

Skills Appraise +13, Bluff +17, Concentrate +8, Intimidate +17, Listen +11, Search +15, Spot +17

Languages Common, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

Combat Gear whip

ECOLOGY

Environment Hell

Organization solitary, punishment (2-4), or chain gang (5-10)

Treasure standard

Advancement 11-20 HD (large); 21-30 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment —

Combat

Automata devils like to dominate, and like bone devils, their role is to monitor others, and they are often found in charge of prisoners or, more often, infernal factories.

An automata devil's weapons, as well as its natural weapon, are treated as evil and lawful for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

All-Around Vision (Ex) A castigas literally has eyes in the back of its head and cannot be flanked.

Demented Punishment (Su) The whip wielded by an automata devil extrudes tiny hairlike filaments, which cause excruciating agony. Targets are entangled by the whip are affected by a *symbol of pain*; this only affects the entangled creature. The save DC is 17 (and is Charisma based). This attack can only be used every other round by each whip.

Entangle (Ex) A castigas' whip entangles foes much like a net. A whip has 15 hit points. If it hits, the target and automata devil make opposed Strength checks; if the automata devil wins, the whip drags the opponent into its punishing embrace.

Fear Aura (Su) Automata devils radiate fear in a 5 ft. radius. Affected creatures must make a DC 14 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell. A creature that saves cannot be affected by the same automata devil's fear aura, other devils are immune to the effect.

Lacerate (Ex) An automata devil deals automatic maw damage with a successful grapple check.

Punishing Embrace (Ex) Creatures grappled by the

automata devil's whip are thrown into its stomach maw, freeing the whip for the next attack. The maw is a mass of churning gears with serrated edges, clockwork gears, and whirling blades. Opponents drawn into the maw face an automatic grapple attack as a free action, which does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, the automata devil it establishes hold and can lacerate.

Summon Devil (Sp) Once per day the automata devil can attempt to summon 1 chain devil with a 40% chance of success. The ability is the equivalent of a 4th level spell.

Heart of Rust {template}

The grating noise set my nerves on edge once more—it was near us now, this thing of corrosion and rot. The night had been long but we never had a chance of escape—how could we escape from a thing that never slept? It came now like a sick animal—dragging its rusting carcass along the cobbles, metal grating on stone. At last, the two heads of the horror appeared and as it smiled, a foul metallic scratching noise filled the chamber.

Heart of rust is a template that can be added to any corporeal creature. Creatures created become things of rusted, jagged metal whose touch corrodes.

Size and Type The creature's type changes to construct with the appropriate augmented subtype.

Hit Dice Hit Dice become d10s. The creature is only part construct, it so retains its Con score.

Armor Class The creature gains +5 natural armor bonus as its skin is made of jagged hard metal.

Special Attacks A heart of rust creature retains all its special attacks and gains those described here:

Corroding Touch (Ex) On a successful touch attack, any metal the victim has corrodes, falling to pieces and becoming useless immediately. All non-magic metallic objects are destroyed, and the creature is able to destroy up to a 10 ft. cube of metal instantly. Magic weapons and items made of metal must succeed in a reflex save (DC 10+ ½ per creature's Hit Dice + Dex modifier) or melt.

Jagged Flesh (Ex) The creature's hide is covered in sharp rusted edges, creatures making a successful natural or touch attack against a heart of rust creature must make a reflex save (DC10 +1/2 per Hit Dice of the creature + Dex modifier) or suffer 1d6 damage.

Splintered Limbs (Ex) The jagged edges of the creature's natural attacks make wounds worse; add 2 to all damage to any successful natural attacks by the creature.

Abilities as the base creature

Skills as the base creature

Feats as the base creature

Environment same as the creator

Organization solitary, pair, or gang (3-4)

Treasure standard

Alignment usually neutral

Advancement —

Level Adjustment —

Challenge Rating same as base creature +2



Sample – Heart of Rust Ettin CR 8

Usually NE Large giant

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; **Listen** +10, **Spot** +10

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 8, flat-footed 19

(-1 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)

hp 75 (10d10+20)

Fort +7, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft.

Melee 2 morning stars +12 (2d6+6) and

slam +12 (1d4+8 plus corroding touch)

Ranged javelin +5 (1d8+6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks corroding touch, splintered limbs

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 8, **Con** 15, **Int** 6, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +17

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack

Skills Listen +10, Search +1, Spot +10

Languages Common

SQ jagged flesh, superior two-weapon fighting

ECOLOGY

Environment as its creator

Organization solitary, pair or gang (3-4)

Treasure standard

Advancement —

Level Adjustment —

24 Kobold Quarterly 7

This heart of rust sample creature uses an ettin as the base creature. The ettin retains its own will and intelligence and all derivative traits (such as collecting treasure).

COMBAT

A heart of rust ettin lives in mortal fear of the master who created it, and generally, it will obey that master's orders. If no master is present it will revert to type and use its cunning in combat, preferring to ambush its victim rather than charging into a straight fight. Once battle has started, the ettin fights furiously until all its enemies are dead.

Corroding Touch (Ex) On a successful touch attack, any metal the victim has corrodes, falling to pieces and becoming useless immediately. All non-magic metallic objects are destroyed, and the creature is able to destroy up to a 10 ft. cube of metal instantly. Magic weapons and items made of metal must succeed in a DC 14 Reflex save or melt.

Jagged Flesh (Ex) The creature's hide is covered in sharp rusted edges, creatures making a successful natural or touch attack against a heart of rust creature must make a DC 14 Reflex save or suffer 1d6 damage.

Splintered Limbs (Ex) The jagged edges of the creature's natural attacks make wounds worse; add 2 to all damage to any successful natural attacks by the creature.

Superior Two-Weapon Fighting (Ex): A heart of rust ettin fights with a magically-hardened bone (hardness as steel) morning star or javelin in each hand, but will also revert to using its slam attack against any heavily armored fighters. Because each of its heads controls an arm, the heart of rust ettin does not take a penalty on attack or damage rolls for attacking with two weapons or slams.

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Soul of Steam {Template}

I could hear it above the din of the workshop—an asthmatic breath-gulping and hissing through the steam of the building. The floor, slick with oil, had thwarted any attempted escape, and now I faced the thing—a dragon of iron, an anger of twisted metal with a heart of boiling steam held within a tightly bound metal boiler. Its barbed tail arched over its back as steam erupted from its maw.

Soul of steam is a template that can be added to any corporeal creature that has been transformed into a creature that is part flesh and part engine. A soul of steam creature uses all of the base creature's statistics except as noted here:

Size and Type The creature's type changes to construct; however, it retains its Intelligence.

Hit Dice Change to d10s. Since it is only a part construct, the creature retains its Con score.

Speed Decrease the creature's base speed by 10 (minimum 10 ft.). The creature is capable of making a sudden explosive burst of speed using its volatile acceleration ability.

Armor Class The creature gains +5 natural armor bonus as its skin is made of metal.

Special Attacks A soul of steam retains all the base creature's special attacks and gains the following:

Breath of Steam (Ex) A soul of steam creature is able to belch forth a cone of scalding hot vapor as a special attack: 20 ft. cone, once every 2d4 rounds, steam damage 3d6, Reflex save DC (10 + ½ Hit Dice + Dex modifier) halves.

Scalding Death (Ex) In death (after being reduced to 0 hit points), a soul of steam creature erupts into a furious explosion of steam as its core engine is breached. This death fume engulfs a 20 ft. radius with steam, everything within the area must make a reflex save (as above) or take 3d6 steam damage.

Volatile Acceleration (Ex) Creatures with this template are able to accelerate in a sudden rush to make a charge attack (providing it was more than 20 ft. from its opponent at the start of the round). This rush enables the creature to make a double move as a move-equivalent action. The creature can make this move only once every 1d4 rounds.

Abilities as the base creature

Skills as the base creature

Feats as the base creature.

Environment same as the creator

Organization solitary, pair, or gang (3-4)

Treasure standard

Alignment usually neutral

Advancement —

Level Adjustment —

Challenge Rating same as base creature +2

Sample Soul of Steam Wyvern CR 8

Usually N Large dragon

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +10, Spot +10

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 10, flat-footed 11 (+1 Dex, +13 natural, -1 size)

hp 66 (7d10+14)

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

Immune paralysis, sleep

OFFENSE

Spd 10 ft., fly 50 ft. (poor); volatile acceleration

Melee +10 sting (1d6+4 p[plus poison) and +10/+10 talons (2d6+4) and +10 bite (2d8+4)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks breath of steam, improved grab, poison, scalding death, volatile acceleration

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 12, **Con** 15, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +15

Feats Ability Focus (poison), Alertness, Flyby Attack, Multiattack

Skills Listen +10, Search +1, Spot +10

Languages Draconic

ECOLOGY

Environment same as creator

Organization solitary, pair, or gang (3-4)

Treasure standard

Advancement —

Level Adjustment —

The template is applied here to a wyvern. The creature retains its rather stupid and aggressive nature.

Combat

The creature still likes to dive from above but has learnt to utilize its volatile acceleration attack to surprise lone figures on the edge of combat.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, the soul of steam wyvern must hit with its talons. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it enables a hold and stings.

Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 17, initial and secondary damage 2d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

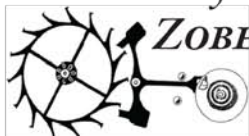
Breath of Steam (Ex) The soul of steam wyvern can belch forth a cone of scalding hot vapor as a special attack: 20 ft. cone, once every 2d4 rounds, steam damage 3d6, DC 14 Reflex save halves.

Scalding Death (Ex) In death (after being reduced to 0 hit points), the soul of steam wyvern erupts into a furious explosion of steam as its core engine is breached. This death fume engulfs a 20 ft. radius with steam, everything within the area must make a reflex save (DC 14) or take 3d6 steam damage.

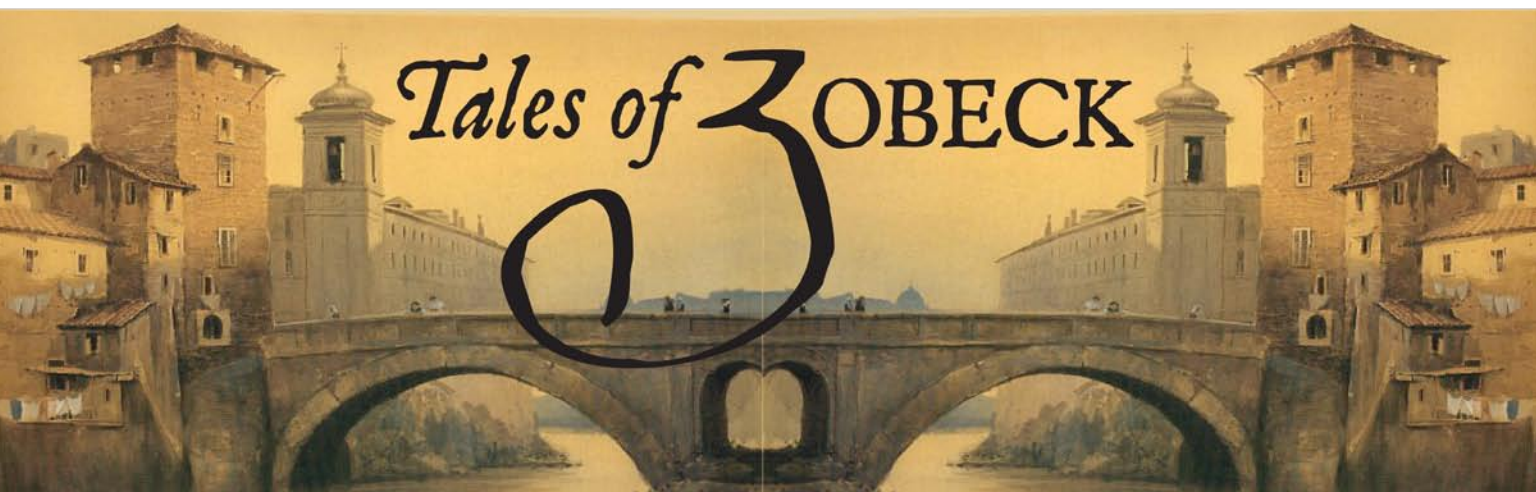
Volatile Acceleration (Ex) The soul of steam wyvern can make a sudden rush of acceleration enabling the creature to make a charge attack (providing it was more than 20ft. from its opponent at the start of the round). This rush enables the creature to make a double move as a move-equivalent action. The wyvern can make this move once every 1d4 rounds.



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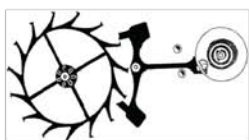
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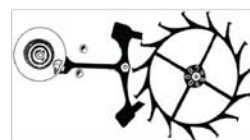
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Sandy Petersen: the Marching Giant



Interview by Jeremy L. C. Jones

Our favorite genius and madman speaks to our lowly kobold diplomats

Sandy Petersen started his career by designing *Call of Cthulhu* (CofC) for Chaosium in 1981. And, without ever fully leaving the dice, Chaosium, or Cthulhu behind, he has moved throughout the gaming industry from Avalon Hill to Microsoft Game Studios, from tabletop to computer games, and back again.

“Sandy Petersen is one of the all-time greats,” said Matt Forbeck, novelist and designer of *Marvel Heroes Battle Dice* and *Mutant Chronicles: Second Edition Roleplaying Game*. “As the designer of *Call of Cthulhu*, Sandy created the most innovative roleplaying game since *Dungeons & Dragons*. In *Call of Cthulhu*, it’s not a matter of *if* you’ll triumph—in the end, you can’t—but how much you can do before you go mad or die.

“To top off that landmark achievement in tabletop games, Sandy then went on to bring stories and atmosphere to the first-person shooter genre with levels for *Doom*, *Doom II*, and *Quake*, as well as *Warchief*. His work has consumed more of my hours than I care to admit, and I never regretted any of them.”

An advocate of intuition in design,

responsiveness in gamemastering, and collaboration with a clearly identified leader, Petersen has brought as much to the gaming table as to the computer screen. And he does it by putting other people’s fun first.

“There are three aspects to game design that secretly thrill me,” said Petersen. “First is that by its nature, I am required to work with a bunch of extremely smart, extremely creative people who all love games. I would happily be trapped in an elevator with almost any of them – they’re fun folks to hang with.

“Second is that I spend my whole day trying to think of ways to get someone else to have fun. Third is that it makes me a ‘cool guy’ among my kids’ friends, so instead of hiding from the old man they don’t mind playing games with me, letting me know what they’re doing, and in general view me as someone they want to impress and keep on the good side of, as opposed to seeing me as one of the elderly repressive aspects of society.”

Kenneth Hite, who has contributed heavily to Steve Jackson Game’s GURPS and more recently worked as a designer on Mongoose Publish-

ing’s update of *RuneQuest* (Petersen’s preferred home game), does a fine job of identifying Petersen’s place in the gaming industry’s pantheon.

“Johannes Brahms said of Beethoven, ‘You can’t have any idea what it’s like always to hear such a *giant* marching behind you.’ That is how any RPG designer worth his salt feels about Sandy Petersen,” said Hite.

“At a time when most of us were still filling graph paper holes with blue dragons and 1d4 bugbears, he created a masterpiece of meshed setting and system, the greatest RPG of all time: *Call of Cthulhu*. Then, five years later, he created the second-most influential RPG of all time, the *Ghostbusters* RPG, which introduced the dice pool engine to RPG design. Add two of the all-time great supplements, *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth* and *Trollpak*, and you have quite a giant marching behind you.”



JONES: What is at the heart of a good game?

PETERSEN: Two of the core elements of a good game are, first, that the player is making interesting decisions that matter; second is that the player is getting

to see new stuff – not necessarily in the form of new art, but that he’s making new decisions or learning new techniques as the game unfolds. New art can be part of it, too.

JONES: How has your understanding of designing games changed over time?

PETERSEN: Since I’m viewing this from the inside, it’s kind of hard to identify. Also, part of the issue here is [that] designing games isn’t a wholly logical process, and should not be. You are making something fun – not something rational -- and you are trying to enhance the pleasure of a non-rational being (a human!). Therefore, some of the element has to be based on intuition and feel – the “yeah, that would be fun!” emotion I get when I see a game feature that may defy logical analysis.

For example, the game *Shadows Over Camelot* logically is just a card game with boardgame elements. And the card play is really just putting together simplistic poker hands. But the feel I get when I play the game gives me the illusion that I am one of the doomed knights in the service of King Arthur, struggling to keep away the darkness for just another few years.

If we were to classify design decisions into Small, Medium, or Big, I would say that most of my Medium and Medium-Large decisions are done intuitively. For instance, choosing to include the Sioux as one of the three nations portrayed in *The Warchiefs* was intuitive. I wanted the Sioux because I thought they were cool. Rationalizing this decision came later. Big decisions (like the nature of a game itself) and Small decisions (like whether Sioux mounted bowmen should have 100 or 150 hit points) are generally made logically and rationally — or at least that is the idea. It does not always work out.

JONES: In a freeform game, where is the balancing point between GM and players? How much is too much freedom? How few is too few rules? And what fills the “hole” where those rules used to be?

PETERSEN: It depends on the game’s size. But generally my freeforms follow

the pattern that there are interludes which are extremely rigidly orchestrated by a gamemaster, interspersed with longer periods in which the players are left to run things on their own as much as possible.

I want GMs to be enablers, not blockers or bottlenecks. The only limit to freedom should be the players’ imagination and their ability to hurt one another’s gameplay. If a player thinks of something cool not in the rules, I want my GMs to facilitate the action.

I like to have a couple pages of rules at least – I find that rules give structure to the freeform and actually give players more opportunities to come up with interesting combinations. Of course, too many rules are hard to remember.

JONES: Is there a link between improvisation and innovation in game design?

PETERSEN: I’m not sure there is a close link between improvisation and innovation, but maybe I am understanding the question differently than what you meant. I see improvisation as the result of inability to predict an outcome. I don’t mean this negatively. When running a free-form, I know that some situation or conflict will occur that takes me by surprise. I need to have enough tools within the game to improvise a solution. Therefore, I always try to include a “tool set” within the rules to let me improvise.

[For instance,] when designing *The Warchiefs*, the programmers put together a long laundry list of different aspects of powers - cost, duration, range, target, effects, etc.. Then I was able to mix and match the various aspects together - like designing a hero in *Champions*, for instance - to custom-design the power for use in-game. This was far superior to having me come up with a power, and then having the programmer simply hard-code it. By having my laundry list, I could change powers on the fly when they didn’t seem to be working out, adjusting it as we tested.

JONES: What role does collaboration play in game design?

PETERSEN: There are two parts to collaboration – other developers, and the players themselves. I try to remember that the players create part of the game experience too. I’m not a fan of the “lone auteur” theory of design. I feel that the addition of extra brains on a project can only be helpful, so long as one person remains in charge (to prevent design-by-committee). One way of creating this is to have each developer be in charge of his own part of the game, and to have him actually have power over that part so he can give his muse full reign.

Because of my seniority, I find myself almost always the senior partner in a collaboration. I don’t think this is always a good thing, you understand. It’s just how things turn out.

JONES: Are the strategies and satisfactions different for designing video games than they are for RPGs?

PETERSEN: [With video games] you have to work with a much larger team for a much longer period of time. Video games are more frustrating for a longer period of time than RPGs. And you can’t rely on the player to manufacture some of the fun - you have to cover all the bases.

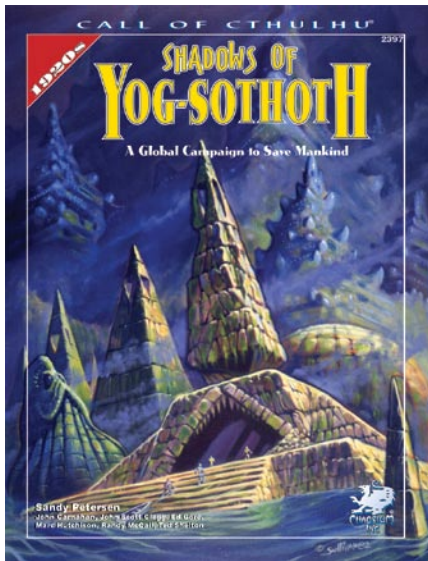
JONES: A question from the KQ forums, has anything ever happened in a game you were running that affected a game you were designing?

PETERSEN: Every time something goes *wrong* in a game, I try to remember it, so I can fix it, or leave that bit out of the next game. When something goes gloriously *right* I then slavishly try to imitate that experience next time, not always to the same effect.

Basically, my antennae are always out when I run a game. I try to be very sensitive to what is going on so it will enter into my next production. This basically happens every single game I play.

JONES: What is the most important element to designing monsters?

Petersen: The monster must evoke some kind of emotional response – fear, laughter, curiosity, etc. I also like the monster to inspire a gamemaster, fellow developer, or player to interact



with the monster and imply a whole background. For example, the ogres in *World of Warcraft* are funny, cannibalistic monsters. A few are friendly, most are hostile. They have their own invented culture that makes players want to interact with them. They are a great success as a monster.

On the other hands, the gnolls in *World of Warcraft* are pretty much just enemies that players kill. There is no interesting culture or background or humor. They're not even particularly scary. I view them as a failure.

JONES: What is the key to exciting encounters?

PETERSEN: Giving the player an interesting decision that matters. Example: in *D&D*, being ambushed by a group of wolves doesn't really offer the players any choices. The players have to drive off the wolves. They might make a few tactical decisions, but that's about it.

On the other hand, encountering an evil wizard and his minions can give the party more options. Do they fight? Flee? Offer to serve the wizard? Try to buy something off him? Offer to sell something to him? Go on a quest for him?

Another key is to have the encounter give the players an opportunity to interact. For instance, in my previous example of the evil wizard if your evil wizards only ever attack when players meet them, then you have in effect cut off their possibility of choices.

I try to extend the choice option even

after the fight is over. For example, since I play *Runequest*, at the end of a fight there are usually wounded enemies. I generally have these guys bargain for their lives, offer ransom. Sometimes their friends even contact the players and offer to make a deal. The otherwise simple encounter becomes a more complex series of choices.

JONES: How do you design a game to maintain a sense of action? Are you deliberate or intuitive with pacing?

PETERSEN: Pacing is the hardest thing to pull off in a game. In a computer game, I try to keep the action level very high all the time. I figure the player can pause the game if he needs to take a break. In a freeform or table-top RPG I try to get a sense of the players' ennui and balance it against how frantic they are in trying to finish the game. Sometimes I finish a freeform [game] early because it looks like it's coming to a close. Sometimes I need to extend it.

A good example is the terrific *Call of Cthulhu* scenario I ran on June 6, 2006 in Dreieichenhain, Germany. I had a team of excellent, inspired players, including some new people who'd never played any RPG before.

At the very end of the game, the players found themselves on the front lawn of the hotel of the damned, backed into a little circle while undead horrors gathered around them from all corners of the horizon. It was just before sunrise. I looked at the situation and decided that *that* was where I was going to end the game. I told them the credits were rolling – the curtains closed on their little embattled group. We would never know if they managed to hold off the hordes of the damned until sunrise, or whether there would ever be a sunrise, or which of them would survive. I felt that all that was actually anticlimax. The peak of the game had already hit. It was time to end. So we didn't actually have a "true" resolution to the adventure! It ended up being one of the best games I'd ever run. To an outside observer, it might feel lame that we ended before "the

end" but to me and I believe to most of the players it felt "right" to end then.

A cinematic example is the film "Glory", which climaxes on a freeze-frame of the main characters charging into the Confederate fort into a hail of fire. Probably most of them die. Maybe all of them die. But seeing them die isn't the point. Seeing them charge is the point.

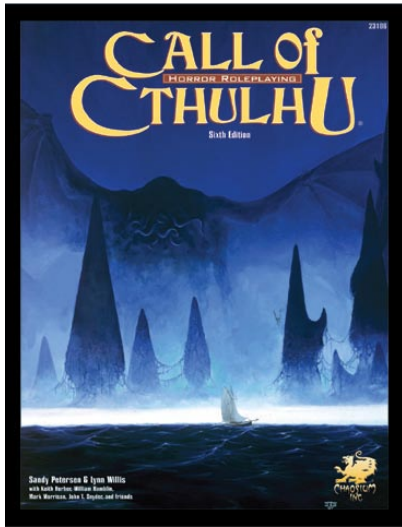
JONES: What is it about Cthulhu that resonates with you?

PETERSEN: I first read the story "The Call of Cthulhu" when I was eight years old. Some time after reading this tale, I loaned my copy of the book to a friend. He didn't return it for four years. I forgot who had borrowed it so basically I had no access to Lovecraft's work during that time, so it became the Great Lost Thing of my life. When the book was finally returned, I treasured it, and soon was trying to find other sources for Lovecraft – which was abominably difficult at the time.

At the age of 14, I got a library card for the local campus library, which gave me access to the old, valuable Arkham House editions of H. P. Lovecraft [HPL]. The library didn't know how valuable they were (nor did I), so I was able to check them out and read them again and again and again. Eventually they figured out these books were rare and locked them up. At the age of 17, Ballantine finally came out with a nearly-complete treasury of Lovecraft in paperback and I bought them all.

So basically I spent much of my formative years seeking after Cthulhu, viewing him as a rare and inaccessible treasure, which it was a privilege to get my hands on (on the few occasions I did). Because of this I cannot view Cthulhu or the Mythos dispassionately. It remains one of the most substantive parts of my life.

My career as a game designer began with the game *Call of Cthulhu* and that has led to my career in video games. Ultimately, Cthulhu is the founder of my family's feast and success. I own an original oil painting of him, which hangs on my living room wall. I owe it all to Cthulhu.



JONES: Another question from the KQ forum: What Lovecraft piece most inspires you, and why?

PETERSEN: It's hard to pick out one that most inspires me. Probably the top ones are "The Dunwich Horror," "The Call of Cthulhu," and "The Shadow Over Innsmouth." Not that they are my favorites, but because they open up such vistas of possibility and speculation.

JONES: What was your role in the original game, Call of Cthulhu? How has CoC evolved? And is there a "sweet spot" for you in its evolution?

PETERSEN: I wrote the rulebook first to last. It was edited by Lynn Willis, of course, and Chaosium also added a 1920s sourcebook (which I also contributed towards). But all the rules, the monsters, the spells, the gaming hints, the original scenarios were all from me. I then was hired by Chaosium and edited or often helped write every *Call of Cthulhu* expansion that came out from 1981 to 1988.

My original idea was that it was a horror RPG. That was my focus. Some Chaosium personnel didn't respect HPL as a writer and were overwhelmed by the horror topic, so to them, the interesting aspect in HPL's writing was the setting – the 1920s. For this reason, the game was originally set by default in the 1920s. That was not (and is not) an important aspect of the game to me, and I have been happy to see Cthulhu brought more and more

into the modern times.

JONES: Another forum question: what did you think the benefits of the Call of Cthulhu experience system would be?

PETERSEN: The experience system (roll 1d100 higher than the skill to increase your ability by 1d6) was taken from the Basic Role Playing system, which I was assigned to use by the folks at Chaosium. So actually Steve Perrin invented it, not me. I love the system though, and use it in *all* my homebrew designs.

Its advantages are 1) it is easy to design a character (just divvy up points among the various skills). 2) It's easy to expand (just add new skills). 3) It's easy to tell what a character can do at a glance. Even a person who doesn't know the game can look at a Basic Role Playing character and tell what he's about: "94% Sneak. 75% Hide. 84% Switchblade. This guy is a mugger, right?" Try that with modern *D&D*.

Ω



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the Black Art of Undead Creation

As I am, so you shall be.

By Ross Byers

Art by Mates Laurentiu/AvatarArt

Nothing gets the villagers running quite like the scabbling of corpse-hands digging their way free from their graves. Undead are a staple of storytelling, especially in fantasy RPGs where undead seemingly lie in wait behind every rock. Presented here is everything you need to expand your use of undead—to bring their creation in line with that of constructs. Using these options, characters have the rules to be able to create permanent undead creatures, and each creature can be created in unique way.

Always wanted to develop elaborate funeral rites to create a mummy? This framework supports your story, with a method that breaks down a set of three simple spells into a more flexible system with two methods of creating undead: temporary animation and permanent creation. This brings undead creation in line with the creation of constructs and gives necromancers more options, especially options to create undead that match their Challenge Rating.

Few things surpass the drama of a necromancer stirring fresh corpses to life in mid-combat. New spells give

even a 1st-level character access to undead minions, if only temporarily. These spells behave much like summoning spells, but they animate corpses instead of conjure reinforcements from thin air. Unlike the original *animate dead*, these spells have a greater range than touch, allowing a necromancer to raise allies from across the battlefield, even from within their graves!

Changing the Game

Implementing these elements in your game should be simple: introduce the new feats for permanent undead creation and the spells for temporary animation while removing the existing spells *animate dead*, *create undead*, and *create greater undead*. If another effect requires one of these spells, such as with the creation of a flesh golem, substitute the new *animate dead* of the appropriate level.

The Create Undead feat (see sidebar) should also be substituted for Craft Wondrous Item in the process for becoming a lich.



Creating Undead

Not all types of undead can be created by the work of mortals. For instance, only a vampire can bring about another vampire, and only a life left unfinished can rise as a ghost. However, the requisites for creating many types of undead are still within mortal reach and some are detailed below.

Undead are significantly less expensive to create than constructs, and fittingly, there is a limit to how many undead a character can control at one time.

Despite the market prices listed below, undead servants and soldiers—and the corpses to make them—are not available for purchase in most civilized areas. These prices are listed primarily as they reflect the time needed to create an undead. Of course, if a necromancer were to charge for his services, these costs are a good guideline.

The market prices and costs to create do not include any costs for obtaining remains to work with. While these

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New Feats

Create Undead [Item Creation]

Prerequisite: Spell Focus (Necromancy) or the ability to rebuke undead, caster level 1st

Benefit: You can create any undead provided the prerequisites are met. Creating an undead requires one day for every 1,000 gp of its market price, 1/25 of its cost to create in XP, and raw materials costing half that price (see individual monster entries for details).

Completing the undead's creation drains the appropriate XP from the creator and requires the casting of any spells on the final day.

The creator must cast the spells personally but may do so using a scroll or similar device.

As most undead are Evil, creating an undead creature is almost always an Evil act.

A newly created undead has average hit points for its Hit Dice.

Mindless undead created using this feat are automatically under the creator's control. Free-willed undead are not controlled, though the creator can attempt to gain control using some other method at the moment of creation.

A character can control up to 4 HD of created, mindless undead per level. If you exceed this number, all the newly created creatures fall under your control, and any previously created undead over this limit are released from your control. (The caster chooses which creatures are released.) Any undead commanded by virtue of a command or rebuke undead ability do not count toward this limit.

Negative Energy Infusion [General]

Prerequisite: Spell Focus (Necromancy)

Benefit: Each corporeal undead you create with an animation spell gains a +2 profane bonus to AC and a +4 bonus to Strength. Incorporeal undead you create with an animation spell gain a +4 bonus to Dexterity instead.

materials are available cheaply through practices such as grave robbing, obtaining them should not be overlooked. In the case of deceased individuals who are well fitted to a particular type of undead, such as cannibals for ghouls, or mass murderers for mohrgs, the GM may lower the creation costs, at his or her discretion.

Creating incorporeal undead usually

requires a soul, rather than a corpse. The remains of a once-living creature contains the residue of a soul as long as the creature in question has not been restored to life or been previously animated as an undead. A soul can also be secured using trap the soul, magic jar, or similar magic.

Creating a Zombie

A zombie requires an intact, or nearly intact, fleshy corpse. A dismembered corpse can be stitched back together with a DC 15 Heal check, but all body parts must come from the same corpse.

Caster level equal to half the HD of the zombie, Create Undead, *gentle repose*; Market Price 50 gp/HD; Cost to Create 25 gp and 2 XP/HD

Creating a Skeleton

The creation of a skeleton requires an intact skeleton. If flesh remains on the bones, it may be left to rot away naturally or be stripped from the bones with a DC 5 Heal or Profession (butcher) check.

Caster level equal to half the HD of the skeleton, Create Undead, *cause fear*; Market Price 50 gp/HD; Cost to Create 25 gp and 2 XP/HD

Creating a Ghoul

The creation of a ghoul requires an intact or nearly intact humanoid corpse. It becomes imbued with the unnatural hunger that characterizes these undead horrors.

CL 3rd, Create Undead, *ghoul touch, animate dead I*; Market Price 250 gp; Cost to Create 125 gp + 10 XP

Creating a Ghast

The creation of a ghast is exactly like creating a ghoul, but it requires a stronger bond to the negative energy plane.

CL 5th, Create Undead, *ghoul touch, animate dead I*; Market Price 500 gp; Cost to Create 250 gp + 20 XP

Creating a Shadow

The creation of a shadow requires a soul. The soul is merged with its shadow-plane duplicate, creating an

unliving shade.

CL 5th, Create Undead, *deeper darkness, desecrate*; Market Price 400 gp; Cost to Create 200 gp + 16 XP

Creating a Mummy

The creation of a mummy requires an intact humanoid corpse. The body must be embalmed or preserved, requiring a DC 15 Heal check. The traditional method is via organ removal, drying, and wrapping, but other preservation methods are possible.

CL 7th, Create Undead, *death ward, cause fear, bestow curse*; Market Price 1,000 gp; Cost to Create 500gp + 40 XP

Creating a Wraith

The creation of a wraith requires a soul. Twisting the soul into a wraith requires an elaborate ritual that suffuses the soul with the essence of darkness and evil.

CL 7th, Create Undead, *darkness, enervation, gaseous form*; Market Price 1,000 gp; Cost to Create 500gp + 40 XP

Creating a Spectre

Creating a spectre requires a soul. The soul is forced to relive the moment of its death over and over while being exposed to vast amounts of negative energy. Eventually, its pain and misery force it to arise as a spectre.

CL 9th, Create Undead, *magic jar, feeblemind, bestow curse*; Market Price 1,400 gp; Cost to Create 700 gp + 56 XP

Creating a Mohrg

The creation of a mohrg requires a humanoid corpse. While the corpse is only partially animated, it is imbued with an utter hatred of the living through unspeakable ritualized torture that converts its entrails into a hideously oversized tongue.

CL 10th, Create Undead, *raise dead, speak with dead, symbol of pain*; Market Price 1,500 gp; Cost to Create 750 gp + 60 XP

Creating a Devourer

Creating a devourer requires the body of a medium humanoid. Animat-

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ing this body as a devourer requires an elaborate ritual, binding the new undead to either the Astral Plane or the Ethereal Plane. During this ritual, the body grows tall and gaunt, leaving the Devourer's distinctive chest cavity.

At the completion of the ritual, the devourer may be provided with an essence from a soul trapped using other means (such as *magic jar* or *trap the soul*), or via the sacrifice of a living creature. The devourer can be created without a trapped essence but will be unable to use its spell-like abilities until it can trap an essence for itself.

CL 13th; Craft Undead, *magic jar*, *planar binding* (any), *enlarge person*, *enervation*, *spectral hand*; Market Price 2,000 gp; Cost to Create 1,000 gp + 80 XP

New Sub-school

Necromancy (Animation)

An animation spell infuses the remains of a once-living creature with negative energy, temporarily granting it a semblance of life. An animated undead creature persists until it is destroyed or until the effect ends. A destroyed undead cannot be animated again.

Animation effects usually require appropriate remains to create an undead creature, as noted in the spell description. Unless specifically noted, gross

physical changes persist after the ending of the spell (the skin does not reappear on a body temporarily animated as a skeleton, for instance.)

Undead controlled with an animation spell do not count against a character's normal limit of 4 HD/level of controlled undead.

New Spells

Animate Dead I

Necromancy (Animation)

Level: Clr 1, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S, M/DF

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: One or more animated undead

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Targets: Corpses, no two of which can be more than 30 feet apart [See below]

Saving Throw: Will negates (object)

Spell Resistance: No

This spell temporarily infuses the remains of a once-living creature with negative energy, animating it in a mockery of its former life. The resulting undead creature acts immediately, on your turn. It attacks your opponents to the best of its ability. If you can communicate with the creature, you can direct it not to attack, to attack particular enemies, or to perform other actions within the limits of the

creature to obey or understand.

The spell animates one of the creatures from the 1st-level list on the accompanying table. You choose which kind of undead to animate, and you can change that choice each time you cast the spell.

To animate a particular type of undead, the correct remains must be available for each creature created. Remains must be mostly intact. A soul is present in any corporeal remains for which the creature has not been resurrected or previously animated as an undead. A soul can also be obtained from *trap the soul*, *magic jar*, or similar magic.

Unlike most spells, line of effect is not required to animate the remains, as long as their location is known. This allows a body to be animated in its grave.

An animated undead cannot summon or otherwise conjure another creature, create spawn, or use any teleportation or planar travel abilities.

When you use an animation spell to create an Air, Chaotic, Earth, Evil, Fire, Good, Lawful, or Water subtype creature, it is a spell of that type.

Within the area of a *desecrate* spell, the duration of *animate dead I* is doubled.

Arcane Material Component: A fistful of graveyard soil or a fragment of a tombstone.

Animate Dead II

Necromancy (Animation)

Level: Clr 2, Sor/Wiz 3

This spell functions like *animate dead I*, except that you can animate one creature from the 2nd-level list or 1d3 of the same option from the 1st-level list.

Animate Dead III

Necromancy (Animation)

Level: Clr 3, Sor/Wiz 4

This spell functions like *animate dead I* except that you can animate one creature from the 3rd-level list or 1d3 creatures of the same kind from the 2nd-level list, or 1d4+1 of the same option from the 1st level list.

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Table 1: Undead Animation

Spell Level	Undead	Remains Required	Alignment
Animate Undead I	ghoul	humanoid corpse	CE
	1d4 skeletons (1 HD)	appropriate corpse or skeleton	NE
	skeleton (2-3 HD)	appropriate corpse or skeleton	NE
	1d3 zombies (2 HD)	appropriate corpse	NE
	zombie (4 HD)	appropriate corpse	NE
Animate Undead II	skeleton (4-5 HD)	appropriate corpse or skeleton	NE
	zombie (6 HD)	appropriate corpse	NE
Animate Undead III	ghast	humanoid corpse	CE
	shadow	humanoid soul	CE
	skeleton (6-7 HD)	appropriate corpse or skeleton	NE
	wight	humanoid corpse	LE
	zombie (8-10 HD)	appropriate corpse	NE
Animate Undead IV	skeleton (8-9 HD)	appropriate corpse or skeleton	NE
	zombie (12-14 HD)	appropriate corpse	NE
Animate Undead V	skeleton (10-11 HD)	appropriate corpse or skeleton	NE
	wraith	humanoid soul	LE
	zombie (15-16 HD)	appropriate corpse	NE
Animate Undead VI	skeleton (12-14 HD)	appropriate corpse or skeleton	NE
	zombie (18-10 HD)	appropriate corpse	NE
Animate Undead VII	skeleton (15-17 HD)	appropriate corpse or skeleton	NE
	spectre	humanoid soul	LE
	Animate Undead VIII	mohrg	humanoid corpse
greater shadow		humanoid soul	CE
skeleton (18-20 HD)		appropriate corpse or skeleton	NE
Animate Undead IX	devourer	humanoid corpse	NE
	dread wraith	humanoid or giant soul	LE

Animate Dead IV

Necromancy (Animation)

Level: Clr 4, Sor/Wiz 5

This spell functions like *animate dead I*, except that you can animate one creature from the 4th-level list or 1d3 creatures of the same kind from the 3rd-level list, or 1d4+1 of the same option a lower level list.

Animate Dead V

Necromancy (Animation)

Level: Clr 5, Sor/Wiz 6

This spell functions like *animate dead I* except that you can animate one creature from the 5th-level list or 1d3 creatures of the same kind from the 3rd-level list, or 1d4+1 of the same option from a lower level list.

Animate Dead VI

Necromancy (Animation)

Level: Clr 6, Sor/Wiz 7

This spell functions like *animate dead I* except that you can animate one creature from the 6th-level list or 1d3 creatures of the same kind from the 5th-level list, or 1d4+1 of the same option from a lower level list.

Animate Dead VII

Necromancy (Animation)

Level: Clr 7, Sor/Wiz 8

This spell functions like *animate dead I* except that you can animate one creature from the 7th-level list or 1d3 creatures of the same kind from the 6th-level list, or 1d4+1 of the same option from a lower level list.

Animate Dead VIII

Necromancy (Animation)

Level: Clr 8, Sor/Wiz 9

This spell functions like *animate dead I* except that you can animate one creature from the 8th-level list or 1d3 creatures of the same kind from the 7th-level list, or 1d4+1 of the same option from a lower level list.

Animate Dead XI

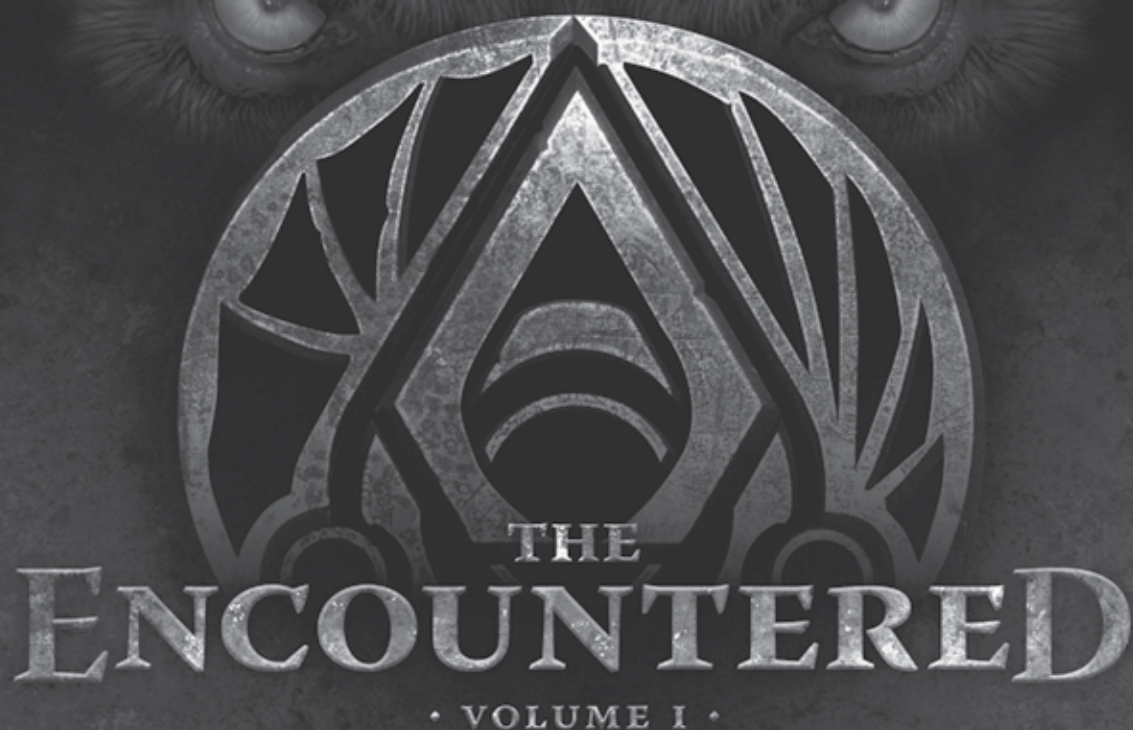
Necromancy (Animation)

Level: Clr 9

This spell functions like *animate dead I* except that you can animate one creature from the 9th-level list or 1d3 creatures of the same kind from the 8th-level list, or 1d4+1 of the same option from a lower level list.



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Ecology of the CENTAUR

Horse Raiders without Mercy

By Wolfgang Baur

Art by Joanna Barnum and Kathy Barker



The bow was impossibly thick: made of layered yew and horn, decorated with an ebony handle, and strung with a tiger-striped bowstring wound of horsehair as thick as a reed. The Rothenian elf pulled on it again to string it and barely bent the tips of the bow.

“It’s not made for two-legs,” rumbled Atropos. “It takes a real archer to string a steppe bow.” Taking the bow back from the elf, the centaur stepped through the string, leaning 1,000 pounds of muscle and bone into the recurved spring, and grunted. Slowly, the wood bent beneath

his huge hands and the half-horse affixed the string. “Shoot for distance?” asked the centaur.

The elf stared and then laughed. “Your bow is bigger than mine; I confess it. But I still think you smell bad.” The centaur smiled and pulled an arrow from his quiver, fully four feet long.

Centaurs are strange, half-human wanderers with no home or nation. On the Rothenian plains, they are friends and rivals to the elves, half-foolish and half-wise when moved by drink or rage. The centaur clans are small, sometimes of little more than a dozen or so, and all too often, they serve as mercenaries, fighting someone

else’s war for little more than oats and cheese. When roused to anger, though, they burn out entire villages and sack small towns, before returning to the great plains, richer and avenged.

There, out in the extensive grasslands far to the east of Zobeck and high in the hills, the larger bands of centaurs make their own lives as hunters, bandits, and nomads, owing fealty to no one and nothing—fiercely independent, willing to die rather than be settled in any village, serving only their chiefs and khans. Humans and elves do not understand the centaurs’ nomadic ways and fear their violent tempers and wild passions. Centaurs think humans and elves are fools to live in huts of wood or stone when they could live free while moving across the great grasslands. These horsefolk would not—could not—live any other way.

History of the Centaurs

The origins of the centaurs are unclear; they can claim many fathers. Most centaur priests near civilized lands claim their people were born of divine will and favor. Or perhaps it was Perun the Thunderer, who watches over the nomads of the great eastern steppes where the Rothenian elves claim dominion over the riverbeds and plateaus and where the centaurs rule the grasslands beneath their hooves from the Ruby Sea to the borders of Trollheim.

The centaur legends themselves claim that they are the true sons and daughters of the wind and sky gods and that both humans and horses are their lesser cousins. According to this tale, humans were made first, but their two legs and small size marked them out as runts and weaklings, and they were ultimately rejected by Perun as too slow and too weak to survive a nomad's life. Horses were the god's second attempt: fast and strong and able to live by grazing anywhere on the wide plains. But in time, their failings were clear as well, for they moved as a herd. The horses bred not heroes but followers, and lacked the cunning of a hunter and the clever hands of a smith or archer.

Mocked by his wife for failing twice, Perun the Thunderer decided to make the third time count for all, and he saw that the previous failings could be mended with the right match of human hands and equine speed and power, so the centaurs were his third attempt at making a race to rule the grasslands. This is a story they tend to keep to themselves most of the time but which they all believe in their hearts to be entirely true.

The stories that centaurs tell more freely are the tales of their arrival from the East, riding and pillaging along the hills to the River Argent, where they first met the ambassadors of the Court of the Shadow Fey. Unwilling to fight the fey in the dark forests and warned of disaster by the priests of Perun if they failed to carve out a home for themselves, many of the centaurs took to roaming a very particular set of pastures and grasslands.

The centaurs are true nomads, retreating to hills and Rothenian high meadows in summer and returning to lower elevations when the meadows are bare and the lure of rustling, banditry, and raiding grow strong. They are currently divided into those who live free in the Eastern grasslands and those who hunt and serve as mercenaries in human lands.

Centaur Medicine

Centaurs have a long tradition of healing and medicine, derived from both herbal and divine sources. This medicine is mostly meant for horses and centaurs and is remarkable in its ability to save even abused horses from the brink of starvation, strangles, or spongy hoof.

The centaurs dose themselves with the painkilling, hypnotic ridegrass before long journeys when a courier must travel without pauses for food or sleep. Ridegrass seems to have no effect whatever on two-legged creatures, though horses, mules, oxen, griffons, hippogriffs, and pegasi can all benefit from it, gaining a +4 bonus to Endurance checks for a day after consuming it.

Centaur medicine also extends to draughts for sleeping, poultices for healing both plagues and poison, and cures for curing impotence. The last of these, they claim, is made with centaur blood to help the two-legged, for "centaurs never suffer from this condition."

The only diseases they cannot cure in themselves or in horses are rabies and lycanthropy. Centaur healers are experts at the treatment of lycanthropy in its various forms, and though they cannot cure it, they can moderate the frequency and length of such shape-shifting and prevent the need to feed on fresh blood and flesh.

Centaur Grooms and Riders

Centaurs attract attention as mounts because of their resemblance to horses, but this is deceptive. Most centaurs consider it a bit presumptuous to even be asked to carry a rider, though the question comes up often. Asking a centaur to ride on her back requires a

Table: Centaur Lore

Characters with some knowledge of nature can learn more about the centaur. When a character makes a successful skill check, reveal the following lore, including the information from lower DCs.

Nature	DC	Result
	10	Centaurs have the strengths of both human and horse, and live in nomadic clans.
	15	Centaurs use lances and enormous composite bows and can trample foes underfoot with ease. They are surprisingly good at stealth and woodcraft for their size.
	20	Centaurs worship nature gods, a thunder god, and the god of wine. They are terrible, violent drunks and are much stronger than a typical human, able to tear apart small foes.
	25	Centaurs fear confined spaces and steep slopes; they cannot climb walls or cliffs, and even stairs are difficult. They rarely enter towns, preferring the open road. They make excellent mercenary scouts.

successful opposed Diplomacy check; if it fails, that centaur will not give the presumptuous two-legs a ride under any but life-threatening circumstances.

The major exception to this is the centaur paladin and certain knights, who deliberately take on human or halfling riders to help them with weapons, armor, and horseshoes—not to mention stairs and ladders. When a centaur paladin reaches 5th level, he may summon such a groom. The groom is a 2nd-level fighter, and in many cases is mute or at least unobtrusive. Halflings are especially prized as grooms, as they weigh less and require less fodder than a human groom.

Anatomy and Appearance

Centaurs' human halves tend to be well muscled and longhaired with a bit

of a mane down their spine that fuses with their equine half. As half-horse, they come in all the colors and varieties of horseflesh, from bays and blacks to chestnuts and grays. Even zebra-centaurs have been reported on wide savannahs.

Centaururs are unlike their horse cousins in that they are omnivores and hunters, rather than herbivores and herd animals. Nevertheless, they rarely eat much meat (and never horseflesh). Centaururs prefer vegetables, roots, nuts, and (most of all) grains, such as rye, oats, and millet. They eat spring lambs and slow-cooked stews on major occasions, such as victories in battle and the marriages between major bloodlines of their chiefs.

Centaururs human halves are deeply muscled, but their faces are not quite human; they are long and horselike, with large and flaring nostrils that permit breathing deeply in a gallop. The human torso is almost entirely lungs; the large livers and the multi-chambered stomachs and intestines are contained in the equine portion of their body. Their enormous hearts lie between the two, somewhat forward from their position in a horse, and often protected by a "belly band" of typically centaur armor.

Both centaur men and women typically have a mane of black hair running down their back as well as a crop of human hair. Their horse bodies have a variety of coloring, though they run to dun and chestnut on the Rothenian plains, and more black and greys in the forests near Zobeck and the Arbonesse.

Centaururs live for 35 to 60 years, at which point they can no longer roam with their families. Elder centaururs tend to die on their feet, collapsing along the line of march. A clan may sit with a dying elder for days, striving to make their passing peaceful. Centaur burials on the plains are a matter of cutting the thick sod into grass bricks, then stacking them around a fallen centaur warrior or matron in a cairn. The size of the mound built around a centaur bears some relationship to the clan's love and respect for that centaur. Winter burials are perforce limited to mounds of snow when the steppe is frozen.

Magic & Equipment

Centaur magic is druidic, and they are powerful followers of both martial and earthy traditions. While a few centaururs thrive as merchants, ever practical in trading among the clans, most males are warriors first, and female centaururs

are rarely seen outside the circles of a clan group. Centaur goods are the goods of nomads: lightweight and few in number. The heaviest goods of a centaur clan are the winter tents, heavy cloth panels that can be rigged with any stout wooden pole to create a shelter for young foals and centaur women.

Clothing: Centaur garments are simple: a harness for weaponry and wineskins and a travelling pack slung over the back (never called saddlebags). In times of war, they wear leather armor and iron helmets but little else. Some clans wear colorful woven vests and long cloaks, but these are primarily for winter and the rainy season. Centaur women frequently wear sashes that cover one breast, a tradition they claim to have taught to the Amazons.

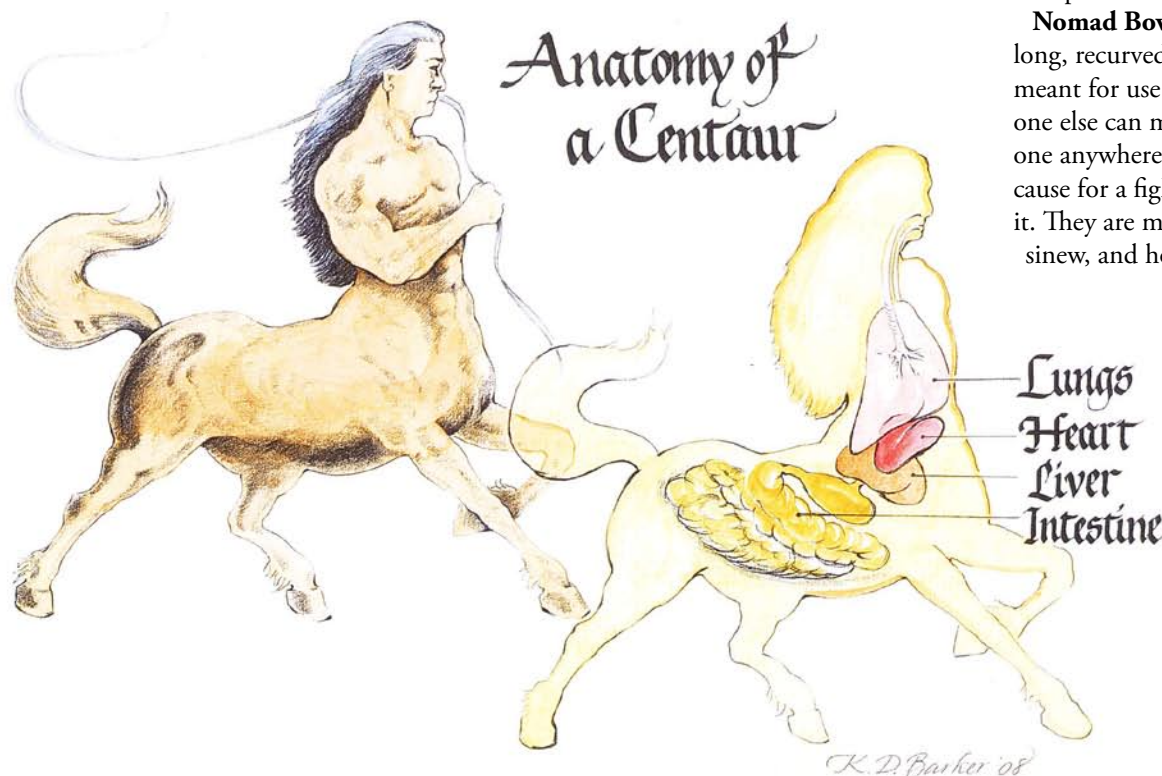
Horseshoes: Centaur hooves are small and tough. Some wear spiked horseshoes in battle but rarely wear them for travel. In cities, they prefer felt hoof coverings on stony streets.

Steppe Lances: These Large reach 2 lances are unusual only in that they are decorated with banners and tassels. The tassels for the deadliest warriors are the scalps and shrunken heads of their defeated foes. Centaururs use their lances primarily for the charge, and then, they trample foes.

Nomad Bows: These 7- or 8-foot long, recurved composite bows are meant for use by centaururs; almost no one else can make them, and finding one anywhere but in centaur hands is cause for a fight with any clan that sees it. They are made of layered woods, sinew, and horn and have a draw of at least 200 pounds.

For this reason, they have exceptional range and penetrating power, making them able to punch through even the thickest armor.

These horse bows have a 30/60 range and damage of 1d12 plus Strength



modifier. However, stringing one requires a Strength of at least 18, and the bow is too large for any size Small creature to use. Size Medium creatures suffer a -5 equipment penalty with a weapon too large for them.

A well-made nomad bow never sells for less than 1,000 gp, and most have names and histories from their makers and wielders. A stolen bow with a long history may often be recognized by other centaurs who see it in the hands of a non-centaur.

Livestock, Tents, and Campsites:

Centaur measure wealth in goats and sheep, which they use for leather, wool, and meat, and the making of panniers, blankets, and tents. The last is especially important—a woolen tent is a sign of adulthood. “Leaving the tent” is a way of speaking of a colt or foal reaching maturity, and “joining tents” is the typical euphemism for two centaurs who marry or who sire foals.

Centaur tents are held up by ropes and a single tent pole. They provide excellent shelter from wind, snow, and rain, but there is a certain wooly smell about them, permeated with the smokiness of cook fires. In winter, the centaurs may build a wall of snow around their tent for greater warmth; their winter camps are matters of tradition and the same herd of centaurs may return to the same camp year after year or may circulate among two or three favored sites.

Society of the Centaurs

Centaur society can be divided into three main kinds of clans: the steppe nomads, the mercenary companies, and the bandits. Each of these has some kinship with the others, and all three share a fondness for direct election of their kings and war leaders. It is, above all, a meritocracy, where a king can be deposed by the will of his horde.

Clans, Hordes, Captains, and Kings

While a herd of centaurs might seem like an accurate term, they prefer to call themselves “clans” for groups up to a dozen or so, and a horde for any greater number. Clans are led by a powerful male (a stallion, chief, khan, or captain). When enough clans gather, they sometimes choose to send a group of young warriors on a yearlong or two-year “bandit year” to raid the elven redoubts or to try the defenses of the Osmanli sultan or to strike west against the lands near Zobeck. During this bandit year, the young warriors learn both the rudiments of stealth and raiding and the tactics that make them successful on the plains.

In practice, many of those on their bandit year spend only a short time raiding, then hire their services to some respected caravan master and serve as guards. This way, they visit distant cities on the islands off the coast of Arbonesse or cross the snows of Trollheim

or drink from the desert oases of Hatapesh and Siwal. These wanderers don’t always return to the steppes, but those who do have learned the arts of many lands, strange sorceries, or tricks of healing which they share in the winter camps or the summer gatherings.

Those summer gatherings are when the captains, khans, and chiefs decide whether any clan or tribe has suffered such an insult that they must be avenged. These occasions are rare (perhaps twice a generation or so), but invariably, the entire centaur nation will sweep off the plains that summer to destroy all border settlements, burn crops, and run riot against the defenses of the offending nation. The trolls, the Osmanli, the slavers of Harkasa, the prince of Doresh and others have all learned this lesson well, so few dare to wipe out a centaur band.

Two-Legged Allies

The best friends and allies of the centaurs among humanoids are humans, halflings, and elves; dwarves and kobolds distrust centaurs as too big and too dangerous, respectively. Among humans, the attitude is similar, but the Kariv wanderers and the centaurs often share a road, rustle livestock together, or raid a small hamlet for food. The Kariv understand the hardships of the road, and their smiths will always shoe a centaur for free (the practice is considered to bring good luck). In return, centaurs often act as scouts and

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defenders for Kariv wanderers who may face danger from human, goblin, or other bandits. More than once has a Kariv caravan been rescued by centaur information or lances, and centaur bandits never rob the Kariv (they consider the practice ill-fated).

Elves and centaurs are a more complex mix. Elves consider centaurs uncouth, foul smelling, and boorish but find them oddly charming for their honesty, directness, and superb woodcraft and archery. Though few elves admit it, centaur archery is superior to their own in raw power and in distance. The difference in accuracy lies in the elves' favor, but as many have pointed out, "one centaur arrow is worth three of the elves'."

Cults and Religion

Centaur of Zobeck and the surrounding lands, west to Arbonesse, and east to the Rothenian plains are worshippers of many gods, from the Sun God to the harsh spirits of wind and ice. Most follow Perun, and they are invariably drawn to the primal gods: war, fertility, love, healing, and death, and have little patience for complex theology or subtle worship of magic, knowledge, or abstract codes of behavior.

Their favorite divine patron in the Free City is Porevit, the Green God in his aspect of god of wine and fertility. Centaurs are notorious for raiding wineries and brewer's shipments and for sacking them entirely.

Centaur Tactics and Combat

Centaur are creatures of both the overwhelming charge and the steady fire-and-retreat schools of warfare; in both cases, their mass and speed make them dangerous.

The Charge: A centaur charge is dangerous because it is wild and reckless; it begins with a volley of enormous clothyard arrows from their bows and then turns into a rumbling approach as the centaurs put away bow and quiver and lower their steppe lances to strike with a 20-foot reach. If the shock of the lances does not break a group of defenders (rare, but dwarven pike and other well-trained troops can withstand it), there follows the trampling of hooves and the use of long, wicked falchions.

A lethal centaur charge is always directed against opposing troops and armed defenders; a rush against women, children, or old men will always end with centaurs carrying away slaves and hostages for ransom. These are not unknown, but rare.

The Slow Burn: Centaurs, when they are truly angry, use their bows as instruments of revenge rather unlike elven archery. They fire from up to 300 yards (180 squares), raining down death in the form of large, fiery arrows that set peasant huts or granaries to burning. In some cases, they poison their arrows by rolling them in dung, to bring on the blood rotting sickness in foes (see table below).

The Standard Raid: Centaurs are happy to take anything that other races do not value enough to protect properly; this is often livestock but also grains, cloth, and coin. A standard raid begins just before dawn or at night, with centaurs shooting sentries with arrows enchanted with silence 15' radius and, then, galloping to the attack in two groups; one is a diversion, meant to draw defenders away from the object of the raid, whether that be a corral, barn, or a storehouse for grain.

Blood Rotting Sickness		Level 6 Disease	
Any cut from centaur arrows taints the blood and leaves victims feverish and weak.		Attack: +9 vs. Fortitude Endurance improve DC 23 maintain DC 19 worsen DC 18 or lower	
The target is cured.	Initial Effect The target loses one healing surge that it cannot regain until cured.	The target permanently loses one point of Constitution.	Final State The target is immobilized.

Centaur Trample (Centaur Racial Power)

You rear up and smash foes beneath your hooves, knocking them sprawling.

Encounter • Standard Action

Effect: You make a normal move, stepping into enemy squares (drawing an opportunity attack) and make a Reflex attack against the foe for 1d6 + Strength on a successful attack. You must end your turn in an unoccupied square. Increase the extra damage to 2d6 at 11th level and to 3d6 at 21st level.

Rothenian Centaur Bandit

Lvl 5 Brute

Large natural beast (mount)

XP 200

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 80; **Bloodied** 40
AC 17; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 13
Speed 8

⚔ Lance (standard; at-will) • Weapon, Reach 2

+8 vs. AC; 1d12 + 6 damage.

⚡ Thundering Lance (standard; encounter) • Weapon

+8 vs. AC; 3d12+6 damage; attack must be made as part of a charge action.

⚔ Falchion (standard; at-will) • Weapon, Reach

+8 vs. AC; 2d6+6 damage.

🏹 Nomad's Longbow (standard; at will) • Weapon

+9 vs. AC; 1d12 + damage.

⚡ Trample (standard; at-will)

A centaur can move up to its speed and enter enemies' spaces. This movement provokes opportunity attacks, and the centaur must end its move in an unoccupied space. When it enters an enemy's space, the centaur makes a trample attack: +6 vs. Reflex, 1d10+4 damage, target is knocked prone.

Charger (while mounted by a friendly rider of 3rd level or higher; at-will) • Mount

The centaur grants its rider a +5 bonus to damage rolls on charge attacks. Foes knocked prone are pushed 2 squares.

Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, Elven	
Skills +12 Athletics, +7 Healing, +7 Nature, +7 Stealth		
Str 19 (+6)	Dex 20 (+7)	Wis 12 (+3)
Con 20 (+7)	Int 8 (+1)	Cha 10 (+1)

Equipment leather armor, lance, falchion, nomad bow, 30 arrows

Rothenian Centaur Bandit Tactics

The centaur tactics are those of nomads and horse archers: fire, move, and fire again, until your enemy is dead. They prefer not to engage in melee with an unbloodied foe, but once they sense weakness, they charge en masse to strike with their lances and then trample foes underfoot.

Centaur is easy to provoke with taunts; they will charge and engage foes who challenge them to combat.

Centaur Racial Traits

Average Height: 5' 0" – 5' 6" (at the horse shoulder), 7' to 7' 6" at the human head

Average Weight: 750–1,200 lb.

Ability Scores: +2 Constitution, +2 Dexterity

Size: Large **Speed:** 8 squares

Vision: Low-light **Languages:** Common, Elven

Skill Bonuses: +2 Athletics (cannot climb walls)

Centaur Leap: When you are jumping vertically, divide your Athletics check result by 6 instead of 10 (round down) to determine the height you jump in feet. With a running start of 2 squares, divide by 3 instead of 5.

When you are jumping horizontally, divide your Athletics check result by 6 instead of 10 (round down) to determine the distance you jump in squares. With a running start of 2 squares, divide by 3 instead of 5.

Rothenian Centaur Chief

Lvl 7 Elite Artillery

Large natural beast (mount)

XP 600

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
HP 156; **Bloodied** 77
AC 21; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 16
Saves +2 to all
Action Points 1
Speed 8

⚔ Lance (standard; at-will) • Weapon, Reach 2

+14 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage.

🏹 Nomad's Longbow (standard; at will) • Weapon

+9 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage.

🏹 Crippling Shot (standard; recharge ☞ ☞) • Weapon

+12 vs. Reflex; 2d12+5 damage; and the target is slowed (save ends).

⚔ Falchion (standard; at-will) • Weapon, Reach

+14 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage.

Spellseeker Shot (immediate reaction) • Weapon

The centaur chief fires a standard longbow shot immediately before a centaur is targeted with a ranged spell. If the shot hits, the spell fails.

Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, Elven	
Skills +14 Athletics, +7 Healing, +7 Nature, +12 Stealth		
Str 20 (+7)	Dex 20 (+7)	Wis 14 (+3)
Con 20 (+7)	Int 8 (+1)	Cha 10 (+1)

Equipment leather armor, lance, falchion, nomad's bow, arrows

Rothenian Centaur Chief Tactics

Unlike his followers, a Rothenian centaur chief will almost never charge into combat, unless his quiver is empty. Instead, he strikes from a distance with shots intended to cripple and harass a foe.

A Rothenian centaur chief often has magical arrows as well, able to create burst fire or other effects.

When a chief is slain, his followers retreat in disarray.



Powder Burn

Spells of the Gun

By John Flemming

As alchemy progressed and science became a true and respected force, firearms and explosives became the weapons of choice. They gave soldiers a power to rival or surpass the magic of old. One clever alchemist, however, saw that the true power in these new devices lay not in diverging from the ancient mysticism but in embracing them.

Sol Vallatie was a master alchemist and weaponsmith who crafted fine explosives and firearms of all sorts. He also dabbled in the arcane arts and developed several spells designed specifically for these new weapons. Though most of Sol's spells were lost through the course of time, a few survived.

As time passed, practitioners of the arcane improved on Sol's works and created their own spells. Though there is no true book of Sol's spells, most spells of this sort are credited to him. Rarely found scribed in standard spellbooks, these spells are instead often found as single spells engraved into the stock of a masterwork musket or carved into the filigree of an elegant powder horn.

Any spellcaster encountering these engravings must first decipher them by using *read magic* or by making a Spellcraft check (DC 20 + the spell level).

Barrier Cloth

Abjuration

Level: Clr 2, Pal 1

Components: V, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Vestment, robe, or clothing touched

Duration: 10 min./level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless, object)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless, object)

You imbue an outfit of regular clothing, a vest, robe, or similar item worn on the body or torso with magical qualities. While worn, any piercing damage dealt to the wearer from attacks is converted into nonlethal damage; slashing and bludgeoning damage is unaffected.

Blunderbuss Burst

Enchantment

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 immediate action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One firearm weapon

Duration: up to 1 min./level (D)

Saving Throw: Will partial (object); see text

Spell Resistance: Yes (object)

This spell is cast on a firearm as it is being fired. You do not need to declare a readied action to do this but must see that the weapon is being used.

If the saving throw succeeds, the weapon is fired normally, but it deals an additional half of its rolled damage to the weapon wielder. If the saving throw fails, the weapon deals its full damage to the weapon wielder and is destroyed.

A magical weapon receives a second saving throw to avoid destruction; see the standard rules for damaging magic items, and grant a saving throw bonus equal to 2 + one-half its creator's caster level (round down). In such a case, if this second save is successful, the weapon still deals its full damage to the weapon wielder but is otherwise unharmed.

Material Component: a small metal hammer and a cork



Deadeye

Divination

Level: Brd 1, Clr 1, Rgr 1

Components: V, DF/F

Casting Time: 1 move action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 min./level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

You gain temporary insight and clarity of vision. While this spell is in effect all range penalties for attacks, spot checks, and similar abilities are reduced by half. This does not extend the range of any spell or weapon, nor allow an attack to go beyond the maximum for that weapon.

Deadeye can be made permanent with a *permanency* spell, requiring a minimum caster level 11th and 1500 XP.

Arcane Focus: a small glass lens

Heart Seeker

Transmutation [Evil]

Level: Clr 7, Sor/Wiz 8

Components: V, S, DF/F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Area: One firearm bullet

Duration: See text

Saving Throw: Fortitude partial

Spell Resistance: Yes

By touching a single bullet, or touching the weapon into which it is loaded, you bestow upon the bullet limited animation and a ravenous otherworldly

hunger. The ammunition remains potent for only a single round. If the bullet successfully deals damage to a target during this time, it will immediately burrow deep into the target dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage. A successful Fortitude saving throw reduces the damage to 1 point.

Even if the save is successful, the target will be sickened for 2d4 rounds after the initial save (-2 on all attacks, damage rolls, saves, skill checks, and ability checks). After this period, the target must make another save as the bullet reaches their heart. On a failed save the bullet consumes the heart, and the target dies instantly; on a successful save the bullet shatters, and the target suffers another 1d4 Con damage.

During the period of sickness, a successful *dispel magic* will end the spell and destroy the bullet. A *dispel evil* cast on the target expels the bullet and ends the spell, but the bullet makes a save using the caster's base Will bonus.

Arcane Focus: a piece of fresh raw meat

Misfire

Transmutation [water]

Level: Clr 1, Brd 2, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One or more firearms or explosives, no two of which can be more than 15 ft apart

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates (object)

Spell Resistance: Yes (object)

This spell will affect any firearm or explosive, causing the powder within the weapon to become fouled, damp, and ruined. Firearms affected cannot be used until reloaded, explosives affected become useless. Although the effect on the weapon's ammunition is permanent, a firearm can be reloaded using normal rules.

For every two caster levels beyond 1st, you may affect an additional weapon—two at 3rd level, three at 5th level, four at 7th level, and a maximum of five at 9th level.

You must be able to see and designate which firearms or explosives are and can choose to affect multiple items on a given creature. In this case, the target makes a separate save for each item affected. This spell imparts no special knowledge of how many firearms or explosives a creature carries, and it reveals no hidden or unseen items.

This spell has no effect on unloaded ammunition or powder.

Material Component: a pinch of damp gunpowder

Momentary Reload

Transmutation

Level: Brd 3, Clr 4, Rgr 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart.

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Fort negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The transmuted creature is able to reload a handheld projectile weapon as a swift action, regardless of the normal loading time. If reloading the weapon would normally provoke an attack of opportunity, it still does so.

The spell does not grant the affected targets additional attacks, but those with sufficient base attack bonus or feat that allows additional attacks can make any normally allowed additional attack after reloading.

This spell affects the ability to reload crossbows, firearms, and similar weapons. The affected creature must have the available ammunition to load the weapon and be able to reach it under normal circumstances.

Musket Brigade

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 7

Components: V, F

Casting Time: 1 full-round action

Range: 60 ft.

Area: 12 60-ft. lines

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex half

Spell Resistance: No

Spells of the Gun

Firearms include pistols, muskets, rifles, and similar weapons that expel a projectile through the use of gunpowder. Explosives include bombs, grenades, and any device that uses gunpowder to create an explosive effect. *Deadeye*, *barrier cloth*, *momentary reload*, and *wall of powder* can be used in campaigns without firearms.

The following spells are all attributed to Sol Vallatie though there is some doubt that he could have created them all.

Bard Spells

1st—*Deadeye*: cuts range penalty by half

2nd—*Misfire*: weapons fail to fire

3rd—*Momentary reload*: allows reloading a firearm as a swift action

Cleric Spells

1st—*Deadeye*: reduces range penalties by half

Misfire: ruins gunpowder in weapons and explosives

2nd—*Barrier cloth*: worn clothing converts piercing damage to non-lethal damage

4th—*Momentary reload*: reload a firearm as a swift action

7th—*Heart seeker*: bullet burrows into target inflicting Constitution damage and possible death

Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

2nd—*Misfire*: weapons fail to fire

3rd—*Blunderbuss burst*: a single firearm explodes, damaging wielder

4th—*Wall of powder*: creates an opaque wall of combustible powder.

7th—*Musket brigade*: conjured array of muskets deal 1d6/level (10d6 max)

8th—*Heart seeker*: bullet burrows into target inflicting Constitution damage and possible death

Paladin Spells

1st—*Barrier cloth*: worn clothing converts piercing damage to non-lethal damage

Ranger Spells

1st—*Deadeye*: reduces range penalties by half

3rd—*Momentary reload*: reload a firearm as a swift action

When this spell is cast, a row of twelve muskets or rifles appear hovering in front of the caster. They must form a straight, contiguous line with one firearm directly in front of the caster. These are real firearms and are blocked by barriers; firearms that cannot be placed are lost. The caster must have line of effect to each firearm.

When the caster completes the spell, the conjured firearms fire simultaneously, creating a burst of bullets that originates from the line of firearms, and each firearm damages everything in a 60 foot line. The firearms must have line of effect. Any creature, object, or structure struck by this burst suffers 1d6 points of piercing damage per caster level up to a maximum of 10d6; a successful Reflex save halves damage. The area of effect extends in a horizontal plane and cannot be angled up or down. The conjured firearms vanish after firing.

Arcane Focus: a loaded musket or that must be fired as the spell is completed.

Wall of Powder

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: Opaque wall of black powder up to 10 ft./level long and 20 ft. high (S)

Duration: Concentration + 1 round/level (see text)

Saving Throw: Reflex half; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

A curtain of continuously falling fine black powder appears where you designate. The wall is 1 foot thick and blocks all types of sight. While in effect, the wall blocks arrows, crossbow bolts, thrown weapons, and normal ranged weapons. (A giant-thrown boulder, a siege engine projectile, and other massive ranged weapons are not affected.) Gasses, gaseous breath weapons, creatures in gaseous form, and incorporeal creatures may pass through the barrier freely. A corporeal creature may push through the *wall of powder* as a standard action.

The wall remains for as long as you concentrate on it and for 1 round/level after. In addition, if you concentrate on maintaining the wall you may, as a standard action, cause the wall to spontaneously combust as if it were exposed to flame (see below).

If the wall suffers 1 hp of fire or electrical damage it bursts into flames, dealing 1d4 hp fire damage for every 2 caster levels to anyone within 20 feet (maximum 5d4) with a Reflex save for half damage.

Creatures and objects within 5 feet of the wall when it explodes suffer an additional 1 hp fire damage per caster level (maximum +20) with no save allowed for this additional damage. If the *wall of powder* is adjacent to a building when it combusts, each 10 ft. section of structure suffers damage.

While the wall must be vertical, you can shape it in any continuous path along the ground that you like. It is possible to create cylindrical or square walls to enclose specific points.

The wall has no hardness or hit points and cannot be destroyed by conventional means; it is dispersed by strong winds or rain. *Wall of powder* does not function underwater, and any wind or weather effect (including *gust of wind* spell) that has a chance to extinguish protected flames has the same chance to dispel *wall of powder*.

Material Component: a pinch of gunpowder.



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The Hard-Knock Life

Rogues Got it Rough

by John Baichtal

The classic fantasy thief, as he's typically played, tends to focus on the fun and glamorous side of being a rogue. Imagine Fritz Leiber's Grey Mouser relaxing in his favorite tavern, brawling, wenching, robbing, and dueling to his heart's content. He never needs an honest job or fears being imprisoned, and anytime something untoward happens, it is surely the prelude to another adventure.

But is it realistic? Perhaps, a touch more realism could add to the fun. Rogues shouldn't have it too easy.

Every One of Them an Adventurer

Historically, most people were rogues because of a lack of opportunity. It was a dirty, dangerous, and poverty-stricken life. Some became thieves due to the realities facing their race or social class. Others took to crime when their once well-to-do family fell suddenly on hard times. Still others were simply too wicked or lazy to live any other way.

Perhaps more than with other classes, this "back story" provides critical information on creating a player-character rogue. Did your character choose to be a burglar to avoid the life of a simple servant? Do they smuggle to maintain the family trade? Do they simply scrape and filch to stave off hunger?

One thing every rogue has in common is a spirit of adventure. Anyone can be a peon or a servant; not everyone, however, dares risk the rack—or even the noose—simply to live his or her own life.

No Place like Home

In most fantasy settings, the local thieves guild plays the most important role in the life of a thief. The guild survives by serving as a gatekeeper and a quartermaster for its members—safe

houses, fences, training, and so on. In return, it expects a cut of each member's earnings, a pretense of their loyalty, and judiciousness in their business.

In some respects, a rogues guild is more egalitarian than any other medieval guild. Trade guilds such as goldsmiths unions expect applicants to purchase apprenticeships or else be related to a current member. Thieves guilds, on the other hand, tend to allow anyone to join as long as they have the earning potential to catch the guildmaster's eye.

For their part, the local authorities accommodate the guild. Yes, that's right; the town guard wants there to be a rogues guild. If you are a guard captain, would you rather exercise a limited amount of control over the underworld via a guild than have no control whatsoever? Besides, the town's fat cats appreciate a source of safe and reasonably priced pleasures such as brothels and games of chance. Usually, an unspoken agreement protects everyone; the rogues keep the serious crime down to a minimum, usually directed at other underworld elements, and they steer clear of certain sensitive targets.

From the guildmaster's perspective, the guild maximizes his income by controlling the underworld. He encourages profitable activities while discouraging unprofitable ones. Ideally, all thieves in the guild's territory are members, but in practice, the guild simply doesn't want most possible applicants and can't recruit some others.

Guildless, Like It or Not

So not every rogue is a member of the guild. Some decline to join; others are too pathetic to be asked. The vast majority of guildless ne'er-do-wells live a very modest life ranging from "starving



to death" to lower-middle class. The ordinary cutpurse inhabits the bottom of the heap. Too cowardly or weak to be a full-blown mugger, he lives precariously on the coppers and silvers he collects while hoping desperately to avoid detection by guards and guild alike.

Most PC rogues live much more comfortably, mainly due to adventuring income. Ironically, this cash influx usually keeps them out of trouble with the guild. Very few adventuring thieves risk crime sprees in their home city—they don't need the money. With steel-laden companions and magical and clerical support, adventuring presents fewer risks and greater rewards than a solo burglary job.

In any case, most PC rogues are too independent to join a guild. To have their hard-earned loot tithed and their behavior regulated by some self-appointed superior goes against their whole philosophy. Unfortunately, this means the guild will always be harassing them to join. If they're bottom feeders, the attempts will amount to bullying and robbery ("dues") while more skillful rogues find themselves under a more subtle pressure, but pressure nonetheless.

Characters in the middle of the spectrum have it particularly difficult because the guild controls the infrastructure that supports illicit activity: fences, smuggling routes, and safe houses. How can an independent burglar flip his ill-gotten goods if all the fences in town refuse to deal with him? How can a card sharp do business without access

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to the most lucrative gambling dens? Higher-level rogues usually have their own contacts for moving illicit merchandise, or work at the behest of a powerful patron: visualize Conan climbing up the walls of a merchant's villa to steal a fabulous gem at the behest of a sly-faced Stygian.

A Loner, But Not Lonely

While rogues are (sometimes grudgingly) accepted in adventuring circles, the fact remains no one in their right mind trusts a thief.

I'm reminded of a Bill Willingham illustration for the old module B2: *Keep on the Borderlands*. A group of adventurers have caught the party thief filching treasure and have turned him upside down, causing a torrent of loot to pour out of his pockets and pouches.

Many lawful characters see the party thief as being a selfish and faithless shirker who occasionally helps out with a lock or trap but spends the rest of the time avoiding fights and pinching treasure. And these are his friends! Imagine what ordinary citizens—to say nothing of guards and other authority figures—think of our rogue. It goes without saying that most people will consider a rogue merely an unrepentant criminal.

But there are those who not only like rogues but also depend on them for business. Call it a thieves' support network. Imagine seedy taverns and unsavory eating houses catering to his or her palate. Crooked jewelers and dry goods dealers willing to flip illicit merchandise. Craftsmen who make rogues' specialized equipment, rooming houses whose operators look kindly upon jobless rascals shooting dice and plotting larceny in their apartments.

Of course, many of these gray businesses, often gathered together in a slum, rogue's quarter, or other shady district, become affiliated with one or more thieves guilds, thus limiting the options of unaffiliated brethren.

Fury of a Cheated Taxman

One factor of medieval life often overlooked in fantasy games is one of the

two oft-quoted sureties. Kings have no internal staff for raising money; instead they employ freelancers who are scarcely better than thugs and extortionists to collect funds from the citizenry.

So why wouldn't the taxman stop by the inn and interrupt the victorious adventurers' celebratory dinner? Surely the king would like a share in the spoils. But somehow, PCs always seem to get out of taxes. Perhaps the adventurers have curried favor with the king thanks to all their perilous quests. Possibly they are simply too formidable, and the taxman doesn't dare approach them.

Nevertheless, none of this applies to the vast majority of rogues. Imagine being a middle class burglar, living comfortably on his earnings. Along comes a bully to take away all you've won. Unless you're a deadly swordsman or affiliated with the guild, there's not a whole lot you can do.

Some rogues disguise their occupations by assuming a "cover" occupation like tailor or merchant. But what happens if the rogue gets successful? If the taxman arrives and sees 1,000 gold in furnishings in the tailor's hut, he's going to haul out his manacles. Avoiding taxation is a crown offense, which brings us to...

You Are So Totally Busted!

PC thieves rarely suffer any kind of real punishment in the course of their careers—let's face it, beheading a player character just isn't fun for anyone. Nevertheless, from a more realistic viewpoint, capture and punishment is a strong possibility for most rogues.

While every campaign reflects a different vision of justice and judicial mercy, it's possible to paint some generalizations. First, investigative and punitive magic prices itself out of the capabilities of most guardsmen, not counting capital offenses or crimes against the state. This means that most petty thieves are unlikely to suffer the more hideous fates wizards come up with—withering limbs, planar exile, polymorphing, and so on. Unfortunately, the mundane punishments

available to lawgivers more than suffice.

First time offenders of minor crimes can expect a simple beating at the hands of a guardsman. If you're caught a second time, things start getting nasty. Spending a few hours in the pillory is no laughing matter. It's one thing to have a rotten tomato thrown at your head. What if someone throws a rock, or physically punches you?

Contrary to renaissance faire reenactments, a pillory experience is likely to deal the character some serious injuries along the way, along with abject humiliation. Next comes flogging, which typically leaves the victim horribly injured and permanently scarred.

Many minor crimes like brawling or pickpocketing carry this punishment. Repeated minor offenses could result in a painful and highly visible brand such as the letter "T" on the cheek—ruining any chance of legitimate employment and guaranteeing perpetual harassment from town guardsmen wherever you go. The penultimate punishment is mutilation, and the classic example is cutting off a thief's hand.

Finally, major offenders and incorrigibles usually end up on the gallows. But don't forget other punishments like fines, hard labor, forced service (the old "quest" song-and-dance), or exile.

One punishment you won't find is imprisonment. In medieval times, jails and prisons were solely for holding convicts prior to corporal punishment or execution—the incarceration was not in itself the punishment. Exceptions were made for special prisoners like nobles or clerics who could not be punished through normal means but were a threat to the authorities.

Gray Foxes

So what happens when rogues grow old? True, few adventurers and even fewer thieves live to old age, but it could happen! For humans living on a subsistence diet, middle age is in the 30s. The over-the-hill thief better pray he's got a lot of money salted away, or maybe he's in a position of authority in the guild. Could be he's gone legit with his earnings and opened a tavern or rooming house.

Ordinary citizens hope their children and grandchildren look out for them but adventurers in general and rogues in particular often have, how shall I put it, fragmented familial relations. And in the medieval era, there is no safety net. If you grow old you had better hope that you have family that will look out for you.

The worst case scenario—besides not making it to middle age!—would be to continue to have to "work." Such an unfortunate is destined for a pauper's grave.

So You Still Want To Be a Rogue?

No PC and precious few NPCs have an easy time of it, but arguably, rogues have it the worst of all. No other class is as persecuted, or as despised. But perhaps that's why they're so likeable. The ultimate underdogs, they survive only through stealth, skill, charm, and caution. They live free, and make their own fortunes. They need no one else's help but Luck and the gods of shadow.



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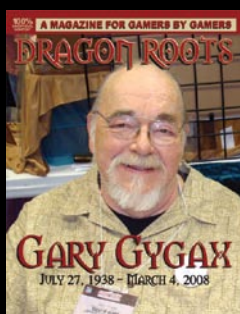
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BOOK REVIEWS

ALL TOMES READ BY CANDLELIGHT

by Cynthia Ward and Pierce Watters



Infernal Sorceress

by Gary Gygax

Introduction by Erik Mona

Paizo Publishing, July 2008

Trade Paperback, \$12.99

258 pages

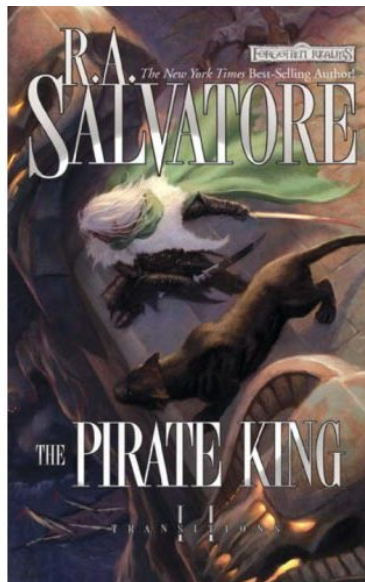
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS co-creator Gary Gygax (1938-2008) wrote several fantasy novels, the best-known of which, set in the Greyhawk milieu, feature Gord the Rogue. Three other novels, set in the *Dangerous Journeys* milieu of AErth, feature the AEgyptian wizard-detective, Magister Setne Inhetep. The last of these, 1993's *Death in Delhi* (scheduled for re-release in late 2008), was believed to be the last Gygax novel.

Fortunately, that belief was in error.

Shortly before his death, Gygax presented **Planet Stories** with an unpublished novel. Set on AErth, *Infernal Sorceress* doesn't feature Magister Setne. Instead, it introduces new characters, including its pair of leads, the lanky daggerman/magician Ferret and the burly swordsman Raker.

The comrades-in-arms barely arrive in Dertosal, city of thieves, before they're imprisoned on trumped-up murder and burglary charges. Freed secretly, the two are charged with finding the true thief-murderer. But, in tracking the beautiful, fiendish sorceress who stole the treasure and slew the goldsmith, Ferret and Raker discover that she's part of a complicated plot-one that threatens to engulf all of Iberia in war.

While clearly inspired by heroic fantasy's most famous duo, Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, Ferret and Raker are distinctly different characters. This is especially apparent in their investigative skills, which allow them to counter deadly schemes more intricate than any encountered by Leiber's duo. While they're not as accomplished in investigation as Magister Setne (and aren't meant to be), Ferret and Raker are good at detection and deduction. And they're fun to spend time with as they investigate, fight, and drink their way across Iberia.



The prose can get clumsy and the exposition clunky, but the pace picks up as the plot progresses, leaving *Infernal Sorceress* an enjoyable romp for fans of good, old-fashioned pulp-style sword-and-sorcery.

-C.W.

The Pirate King

R. A. Salvatore

Wizards of the Coast, October 2008

Hard Cover, \$27.95

352 pages

Trouble brews in the city of Luskan. Long ruled by the Arcane Brotherhood, a mighty collection of wizards, now dominated by the litch, Archmage Arcane, Arklem Greeth, Luskan seethes on the edge of rebellion. Luskan is also home to the five High Captains, lords of the sea. Or, are they pirates?

The Pirate King is the second book in a new trilogy by *New York Times* bestselling author, R.A. Salvatore. The first book in the trilogy, *The Orc King*, chronicled the efforts of dark elf Drizzt Do'Urden and his band of hearties in their efforts to find a lasting peace with the orc Kingdom of Many Arrows and its half-orc king, Obould VI.

Now, Drizzt, one of the most popular characters in modern fantasy literature, and his sidekick, the halfling Regis, lend their minds, their magic, and their strong fighting arms to Drizzt's old friend, Deudermont, Captain of the *Sea Sprite*, Deudermont's friend the powerful wizard Robillard, and a young lord, Brambleberry, in their efforts to rid Luskan of Arlem Greeth. And, there are the High Captains to deal with as well.

This latest effort by fan favorite R. A. Salvatore offers a balanced mix of fight-

Pirate Safety & Emergency Procedures

For your safety, do not remove this card from pirate ship.

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Safety On Board

Spotting Drizzt Do'Urden



Do Not Engage



Ebony skin
White hair



Green cloak
Twin scimitars

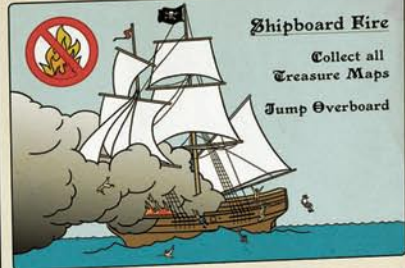


Huge, black
panther



Purple eyes,
Levitation

Evacuation Procedures



Shipboard Fire

Collect all
Treasure Maps
Jump Overboard



Run Aground

Skewer
Navigator/Helmsman
Jump Overboard



Think Before Goin' in the Drink

Do Not Leap Onto
Sharp Rocks

Escape in Non-Flaming
Longboats

Securing Captured Vessels



Replace Flag with
Yer Colors



Lash Former
Captain to Mast



Secure all Booty
and Swag



Tighten peg legs
(may have loosened in boarding)



Scan Horizon for Pursuit



Lightning
Bolts



Water
Elementals



Fireballs



Sea Sprite

Unnatural Dangers
on the Sword Coast

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Even the most dangerous pirates on the Sword Coast should beware when facing the likes of Drizzt Do'Urden. Following in the wake of *The New York Times* best-selling title, *The Orc King*, R.A. Salvatore plunges the dark elf and his friends into dangerous waters with *The Pirate King*.

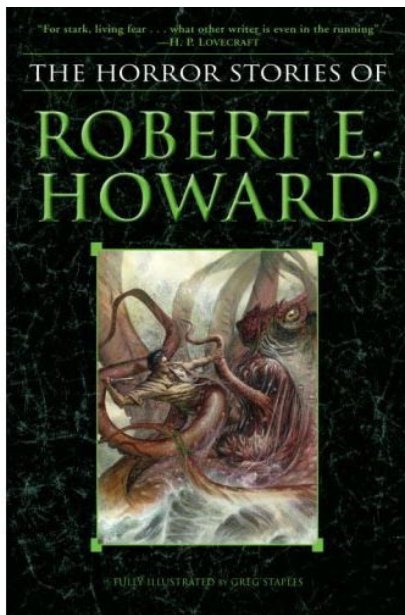
Releases: October 7, 2008

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ing, magic, intrigue, and betrayal as the dark elf fights against evil with occasional musings on the outcome of difficult moral decisions in a world where choices are rarely black and white, but mostly gray. Many lives are, indeed, in transition, in the FORGOTTEN REALMS. A rousing adventure!

-P.W.



The Horror Stories of Robert E. Howard

by Robert E. Howard

Illustrated by Greg Staples
Ballantine Books, October 2008
Trade Paperback, \$18.00
560 pages

Because Conan the barbarian creator Robert E. Howard (1906-1936) is the father of sword-and-sorcery, some readers may be surprised by a book called *The Horror Stories of Robert E. Howard*.

But REH, like most pulp fictioneers, wrote in many genres; and in this collection you'll find sea stories, Westerns, ghost stories, Oriental adventures, boxing stories, werewolf tales, Cthulhu Mythos stories, historical fiction, weird poetry, and S&S. Horror is less a genre than it is an emotion, an effect, an approach. And, whatever their genre, this generous collection's 56 stories, 22 short poems, and four uncompleted tales are horror.

The compilation hits its stride with "The Children of the Night," one of

REH's S&S reincarnation tales about a modern man remembering his past life as a barbarian. Violent in action, emotion, and narrative vigor, this grim, relentless story shows why REH is an important figure in both fantasy and horror.

Some of the other fiercely dark stories include "The Hills of the Dead," in which Puritan wanderer Solomon Kane finds a lost African city; "The Horror from the Mound," in which a cowboy fights a monster with Conan-esque ferocity; "People of the Dark," another S&S reincarnation story; "The Cairn on the Headland," in which a modern man and his barbaric previous incarnation oppose a god; "The House of Arabu," in which a barbarian dooms a city; "The Man on the Ground," in which hatred transcends death; "Black Canaan," in which voodoo practitioners foment an uprising; "Worms of the Earth," in which barbarian king Bran Mak Morn calls down a weird doom on a Roman governor; and "Pigeons From Hell," a haunted-plantation tale ranked as one of the best horror stories of the 20th century.

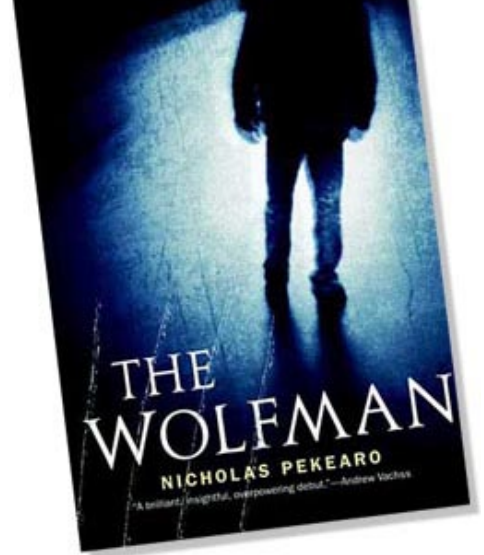
Horror can reveal an author's fears. REH had enormous issues with race; nor was he a proto-feminist. But, while disturbing, his attitudes toward gender and race were mainstream views in his lifetime. And, a suicide at thirty, he never had a chance to outgrow his prejudices.

In his too-brief career, REH established the ground rules of sword-and-sorcery; created one of the most famous characters of Twentieth Century fiction; became an inspiration for fantasy roleplaying games; and inspired innumerable men and women of many races to write fantasy and/or horror. *The Horror Stories of Robert E. Howard* shows why his fiction was-and remains-so inspiring.

-C.W.

The Wolfman

by Nicholas Pekearo
Tor Books, May 2008
Hardcover, \$23.95
288 pages



The Wolfman by Nicholas Pekearo grabbed me by the throat like a shot of cheap whiskey. It burned all the way down but ended with a pleasant glow.

This is not just another Wolfman story. Marlowe Higgins, dishonorably discharged Vietnam vet, wanders the United States, in and out of trouble and always on the move. Every full moon, Marlowe transforms, and he kills someone.

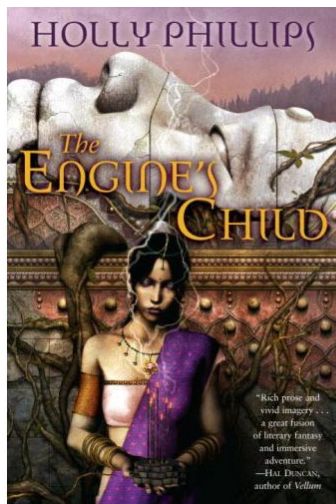
After many years of struggling with the deaths he causes, Higgins settles in the little town of Evelyn, and even makes friends, of a sort, with one of the local police detectives, Daniel Pearce. Marlowe has finally found a way to make peace with his inner werewolf. While working as a cook in a local diner, he scans the newspapers every day, looking for unsolved crimes.

When he finds one, he sets his werewolf self on the scent and on the night of the full moon, tracks down and kills a miscreant. Thus Marlowe is able to live with his own crimes.

Of course, he pays for this, as the soul of each victim becomes part of him. They haunt him internally with visions of their pasts. They drive him with their cravings and needs and Marlowe Higgins becomes a little bit of each of them. But this, he can live with. Then a serial killer comes to town and tracking him is not the easy task Higgins imagines.

The Wolfman is a rough and gritty novel. It is the story of a driven, desperate and not completely likeable man who has to live with horrors beyond his control. It is highly recommended.

-P.W.



The Engine's Child

by Holly Phillips

Del Rey Books, November 2008

Trade Paperback, \$15.00

384 pages

Raised in the poverty-wracked shoreline slum known as the tidal, Moth rose to become a dedicant, a scholar/priest-in-training. But, despite her vows, she's taken a lover-and she has other secrets. She serves the scheming Lady Vashmarna, whose demesne is power and light. And she is helping the tidal-dwellers build a secret, quasi-living engine.

The engine is intended to power a ship. The ship is intended to explore their largely unknown world (to which humans fled-or were exiled-after a long-ago, mysterious catastrophe on the lost homeworld). To create the engine, Moth taps the *mundab*, the god-like power native to the new world. Using the *mundab* releases terrifying shadow beings and destroys a vital bridge-effects that arouse both the government and the orthodox religion against the *mundab*-venerating tidal-dwellers. Can Moth and her co-conspirators finish their engine and embark on their voyage of discovery before civilization crumbles?

The Engine's Child, the beautifully written Del Rey debut novel from acclaimed short story author Holly Phillips, is an unusual entry in the steampunk genre. Neither an alternate history nor an imaginary-world fantasy, *The Engine's Child* is set on an alien world colonized by-perhaps-Earthfolk.

This is a delicate balancing act, and it's not the only one in the book. The plot and the third-person viewpoints alternate between Moth and Lady Vashmarna. The genre balances between science fiction and

fantasy. Moth alternates between lies and truths, secrets and revelations. And, in the author's most delicate balancing act, the plot pivots on a climax which cuts so quickly to the finish, some readers may think it's not in the novel.

But the strong denouement makes the brief climax work, and leaves *The Engine's Child* as one of the year's finest novels of SF or fantasy (your call!).

-C.W.

City of Time

by Eoin McNamee

Random House, June 2008

Hardcover, \$16.99

336 pages

In *The Navigator*, we met young Owen whose father died mysteriously, sending Owen's mother into a deep depression and forcing Owen to fend for himself. He meets a young girl, Cati whose father, The Sub-Commandant, is the Watcher for the Resisters, a band of folk assembled to battle the evil and deadly-cold Harsh who seek to control time for themselves.

In *City of Time*, Cati has become the Watcher. She and Owen witness strange events and try to awaken the Resisters from their eternal sleep. They only succeed in awakening two, Dr. Diamond and Wesley. Wesley belongs to a sort of Baker Street Irregulars, called the Raggies. Something is stopping them from awakening the others, and the moon is moving closer to the Earth causing floods and earthquakes.

Owen, Cati, and Dr. Diamond search for Hadima, The City of Time to bring back a tempod to halt this latest attempt to destroy Owen's world. Wesley battles the minions of the Harsh along with a Raggie girl, Silkie, who awakened on her own, and the female Resister warrior, Pieta. The intrepid band encounters many marvels as they travel to Hadima. Cati becomes a doggie werewolf in one of the most enjoyable plot twists, and she runs the streets and sewers and rooftops with a band of young dog-folk.

This YA novel is very readable if not completely satisfying. The logic is a bit twisted and sometimes things just happen. But young readers will identify with Owen and his struggles against the Harsh.

-P.W



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Tools of the Trade

By Matthew Cicci

Rogues. Masters of deception, masters of stealth, masters of diplomacy . . . masters of getting themselves into trouble. No other adventurer finds himself in as many precarious situations as the rogue. These cads frequently argue that such danger comes with the turf; after all, they serve as their party's scout, trap-finder, diplomat, and any other honorific they think they can lay claim to. While often times this is true, it would be foolish to disregard most rogues' notorious ability to seek out trouble all on their own.

From gambling in dens of vice to fencing stolen goods at the dock, rogues stir up hornet's nests of all types. Knowing this, most of these daring souls are storehouses of odds and ends that may serve them well when they least expect it. A rogue often has something his party needs even before they know they need it. Rogues understand the benefit of a good tool.

Below are some items that just might save your rogue if (see also: when) he gets into a tight situation.

Ironmind Chew

A stimulant concocted by dwarven alchemists, ironmind chew is a gummy mixture of herbs and underground fungus. It bolsters the dwarves' defense against magic-using foes but has recently found popularity among many guildhalls looking to outwit wizardly interrogators.

Ironmind chew is an alchemical substance and provides its user with a +5 alchemical bonus to Will saving throws against mind-affecting effects for 1 hour. Each dose costs 50 gp.

Rogue's Aces

These colorful tarot cards have long bailed the daring out of hazardous situations. This set of four cards is keyed to the classical meanings of their suit;

each ace gives its wielder a spell-like effect and a 24-hour skill bonus. Flipping them face up activates the cards.

Ace of Pentacles

The pentacles suit represents wealth and treasure. Using this card immediately casts *knock* centered on a locked item within range. In addition, the user gains a +2 bonus on all Open Lock checks for 24 hours.

Ace of Cups

The cups suit represents water and its calming, soothing, and cleansing properties. Activating this card casts *enthrall*. The spell takes effect the moment the user starts speaking. The user gains a +2 bonus to all Bluff checks for 24 hours.

Ace of Staves

The staves suit represents prophecy and divination. Use of this card allows the wielder to read minds as per *detect thoughts*. The user is also granted a +2 bonus to all Sense Motive checks for 24 hours.

Ace of Swords

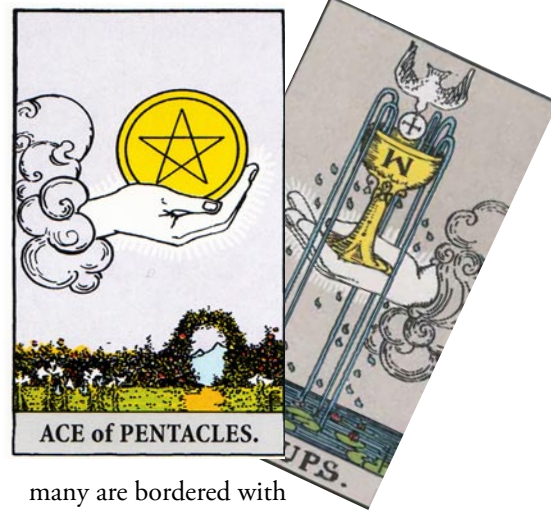
The swords suit represents war and power. Expenditure of this card results in *pyrotechnics* being cast on a chosen fire source within range. The user also gains a +2 to all Intimidate checks for 24 hours.

Each card is consumed upon use. All spell effects operate as if cast by a 3rd level caster.

Faint transmutation, enchantment, divination, and transmutation, respectively; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Items, *knock*, *enthrall*, *detect thoughts*, & *pyrotechnics*; Price 380 gp; Weight –

Slowfall Cape

Slowfall capes are often made of durable, dark cotton and decorated with an avian motif; for example,



many are bordered with raven feathers. These items originated in Brazdurn, the Towered City, as a result of the escalating struggle between the city watch and the Dagger Dare thieves' guild. Tired of losing able bodies to the intelligent and organized militia, guildmaster Harz Lavmir commissioned the first slowfall capes. They proved a smashing success by increasing the increased mobility of his thieves — and by leading to a direct increase in Harz's coffers.

Slowfall capes allow their wearers to enact *feather fall* as needed. In addition, they allow the wearer to glide. Any long jump made from a height is granted a +10 bonus and the wearer does not require the 20-foot running start. For each foot of distance cleared, the wearer descends a foot.

Faint transmutation; CL 1st; Craft Wondrous Item, *feather fall*, *jump*; Price 4,700 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Springjack Boots

The life of a second-story man is fraught with danger. These enterprising thieves must rely on agility and balance to circumvent the ever-present danger of falling to one's death. Out of such concern came the carefully crafted springjack boots. These boots rely on a series of springs and carefully molded grooves to grant the wearer a +2 bonus to Balance and Jump checks. They cost 100 gp.

Buyers beware, though! Early iterations of these boots suffer from poor design. Squeaky springs and poorly padded soles penalize the wearer with a -2 to Move Silently checks. If discovered by an alert buyer, these versions can often be purchased for 50 gp.



THE GARNET CODEx

by Stan!

Art by Luis Guaragña

“When faced with the incongruous or inexplicable, most men will fall back on stark denials and slavish repetition of meaningless platitudes. It is easier for them to trust what they’ve been told than to believe what their eyes tell them. In my travels I have found that the world rarely works the way we think it does, and that truth is often found in the unlikeliest of places.”

—Reginald Garnet,
13th Earl of Eastonshire

The Weight of Scholarly Opinion

The pages of history textbooks, especially those focusing on the ancient world, proclaim facts and assertions that are based in large part on just a few spare details gleaned from a mere handful of diaries, poems, scrolls, official records, and other bits of antiquity. From this relatively small collection of sources, historians and sociologists present to us extraordinarily detailed descriptions of what life was like in centuries and millennia past.

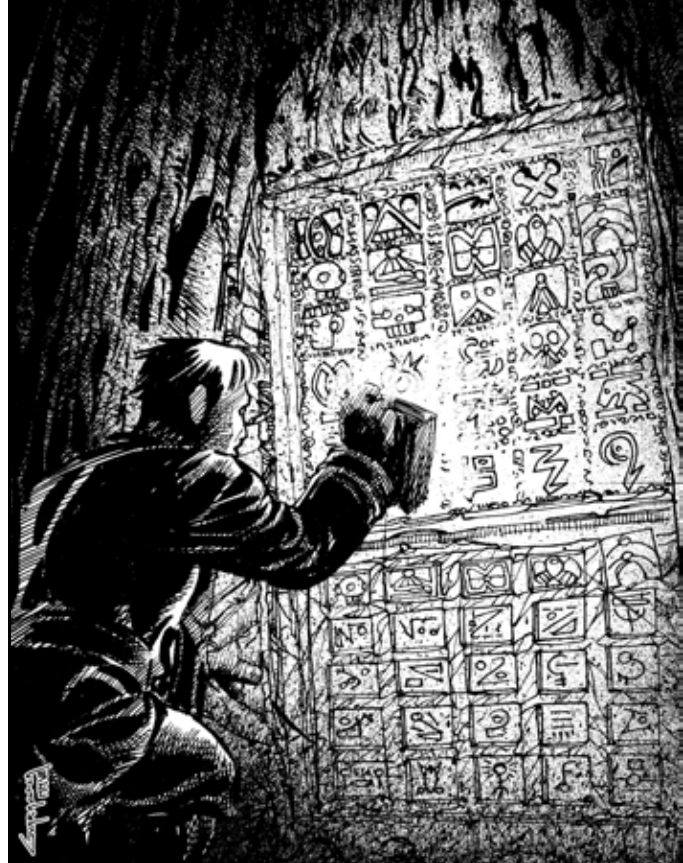
For that matter, not all of these historical records come in the form of books. Some are inscribed on statuary or carved into the walls of royal tombs. Others are painted onto pottery or cave walls. Any bit of decoration or even desecration can provide insights into the details of life in a former age. For example, archaeologists have recently discovered writing on the walls of ancient Pompeii that can best be described as graffiti.

Scholars remain divided, however, on what weight to lend such unverifiable sources. After all, it seems ridiculous to imagine future historians treating the spray-painted wall of a subway terminal with the same scholarly weight as an index of articles that appeared in the *New York Times* in 2007.

But, given the scarcity and brevity of artifacts from some periods—not to mention the frequency with which propaganda becomes confused with truth as the centuries pass—it seems odd that academia chooses to wholly discount some artifacts simply because they provide information that in some way contradicts information found in other sources or conflicts with accepted historical timelines.

The Garnet Codex is a perfect example of a document that could rewrite our presumptions about history and anthropology if its contents were broadly accepted in scholarly circles. The codex is similar in format, style, and content to the accepted Pre-Columbian Mayan documents housed in museums in Madrid, Paris, and Dresden. However, the fact that the Garnet Codex is made from completely different materials and delves deeply into subjects not covered in the other codices has led academics and scholarly organizations to exclude it from the lists of sources for reliable data. In point of fact, most of them decry it as a hoax and a fake created using modern technology.

This is especially disappointing given how few academics have actually



seen the Garnet Codex first hand and how many of them misidentify it as a book rather than a series of cave wall carvings.

Carstensz Pyramid

The cave containing the codex lies on the side of the tallest mountain in Oceania, on the Indonesian half of the island of New Guinea. This mountain, called Puncak Jaya in Indonesian, is better known as Carstensz Pyramid. Over 16,000 feet tall, it is the highest point between the Himalayas and the Andes and the highest island peak in the world. It is also more than 9,000 miles (most of which are covered by the Pacific Ocean) from the sites on the Yucatan Peninsula where the other Mayan codices were found.

It is the extreme distance between the sites and the practical impossibility that Pre-Columbian peoples could traverse the intervening oceans that leads most scholars to completely discount the Garnet Codex as a hoax. However, carbon dating and other scientific examination of the site reveal that the carvings were made more than 1,200 years ago—meaning that this document pre-dates the Dresden, Paris, and Madrid codices by more than 700 years.

Some anthropologists cite this as proof that the *Garnet Codex* is actually a relic of a heretofore unknown ancient, Pre-Tongan Polynesian culture. However, its contents conflict with that assessment, and point strongly toward a connection between these cave carvings and the Mayan civilization.

The Garnet Codex

Discovered in 1933 by Sir Reginald Garnet, a world-traveling adventurer whose exploits made headlines on four continents. Sir Garnet was exploring Carstensz Pyramid in search of the missing link (local legends told of humanoid creatures that lived there, similar to yeti and the wild men of Borneo). He found no missing links, but in a cave halfway up the peak, he found the carvings that would eventually be his only lasting claim to fame.

The codex consists of a series of fifty rectangular carvings. Each individual carving is identical in size and shape to the pages in the other codices, and the hieroglyphs are reminiscent of (and in some cases identical to) those used by the Maya. Even in the broadest sense, the codex's meaning remains uncertain as the few scholars who take the Garnet Codex seriously cannot manage agree on the order in which the carvings are meant to be read.

If each column is read top to bottom, the carvings seem to be passing along information similar to that given by the other codices—astrological calendars, religious rituals, and the history of a few select rulers. (This interpretation has come to be known as the Garnet Translation.) However, a clerical error led to the archival photos of the codex being sorted incorrectly. And when this misarranged grouping was sent to the University of Chicago for additional study, a new translation was discovered.

When the carvings are read right to left across the rows (what is now called the Brody Translation), the *Garnet Codex* appears to be a detailed history of the culture, including a visitation by the Gods, and a single all-powerful man who ruled for more than 400

years and led the culture across the Pacific to discover and settle what is now Central America. This ruler was seemingly immortal, though this version of the codex indicates that he would die from time to time only to rise again on the night of the next full moon, rejuvenated and filled with new divinely-inspired projects for the people to enact.

In the 1980s, during an effort to create a comprehensive collection of cave art, a software glitch resulted in the discovery of a third possible translation. When the carvings were ordered based on a complicated hieroglyphic code referencing the Mayan astrological calendar, the codex told the story of a god (or otherworldly creature) that visited the culture and revealed the secrets of the universe. It includes what seem to be instructions for bringing the god back again or going to visit him in his otherworldly realm. This version has come to be known as the MIT Translation.

The disparity among these various interpretations of the *Garnet Codex* has only led its detractors to further dismiss it. After all, they say, it can't be all these things, so why should they believe it's actually any of them and not just a complete and clever multi-level forgery.

The Codex in Print

Whether or not the *Garnet Codex* gets the academic respect it deserves, it at least has been recognized as a piece of art worthy of commemoration. Over the past 75 years, there have been no fewer than 10 different books containing photographs or reproductions of the cave carvings. These can be found in libraries, galleries, and private collections around the world.

However, each of these books is imperfect in one way or another. Some were printed with several of the photographs flipped, so that they contain mirror images of the carvings rather than accurate reproductions. Others have the order of the carvings incorrect, making it impossible to read the carvings in the proper order regardless

of which translation one uses. Still others have imperfect images—either reproductions with mistakes in them, or scratched or otherwise marred photographs—so that they present a different version of the codex than what one sees when standing in the cave itself.

The only accurate reproductions of the *Garnet Codex* are the 10 original volumes made and bound on the site using rubbings taken directly from the cave wall itself. In recent years, while the Indonesian government allows scientists and other properly accredited individuals to visit the site, touching the carvings (even to take rubbings) has been strictly forbidden.

Of the 10 original volumes, the fate of only three is known with any certainty. One still belongs to the Garnet family and is in their private collection (though they occasionally lend it out to exhibitions honoring the family). Another is in the rare books collection of a small private college in New England. And the final one was sold at auction less than four months ago after being discovered in the attic of an artist who accompanied Lord Garnet on many expeditions. That sale is suspected to be from the estate of the very person who took the rubbings in the first place.

The remaining seven volumes have dropped from public knowledge. Some are rumored to have been destroyed in fires, or lost with ships sunk during WWII. But others simply seem to have disappeared without a trace.

The Garnet Codex in Play

There are as many ways to use the Garnet Codex in your campaign as there are possible translations for the mysterious hieroglyphs. It can reveal important background information, be a source of mystic knowledge, or simply point the way to a climactic encounter.

The Truth Is in There: The tale told by the codex can represent the secret history of the ancients, describing truths that governments have striven to cover up for centuries. It could detail early man's interactions with space aliens,

or dimensional travelers, or even the gods themselves. It could describe the enclave of a long lost race or give directions to a legendary city of gold.

Alternatively, the *Garnet Codex* could be the hoax that the experts have said it is all along, but the reality of who is perpetuating the hoax and what their motives are could have profound implications on the campaign.

Ancient Secrets: The carvings may instead hold the secrets to unlock long lost powers or supernatural abilities. At the very least, it could be a spellbook filled with rituals and spells long forgotten by modern occultists. Perhaps, it provides instructions for travel to other worlds or dimensions and describes the dangers one will find there.

In a less fantastic campaign, the codex might contain ancient recipes for miracle drugs or chemical compounds that have immeasurable value to modern industry. Or maybe they reveal the alchemical secret for turning base metals into gold.

Losing Your Grip: The *Garnet Codex* could also represent information that mortal man was never meant to know. It might contain the details of an impending Armageddon, or be filled with prognostications so accurate that they put Nostradamus to shame. It could even describe the unsettling secrets of how the universe really works—unveiling dark gods, creatures from beyond time, or realities beyond imagination.

This is particularly effective if you are using the Sanity rules as found in the OGL rules or other games and campaign settings.

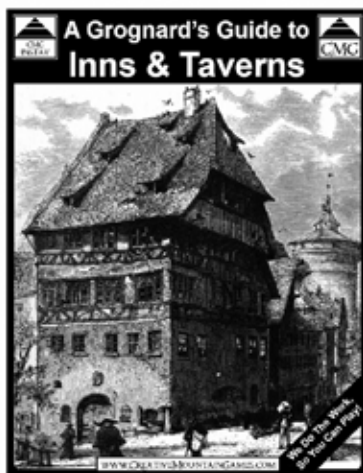
Fantasy Settings: Although the *Garnet Codex* is described in thoroughly modern terms, with just a little modification it can also fit right in to a medieval fantasy setting, too. After all, what better place to find such a mysterious message than carved into the wall of an ancient dungeon or in the depths of a treasure room guarded by a dragon?

The first change required is to link the codex to a culture or race more

appropriate to the setting. Perhaps this is a relic of an ancient goblin, kobold, or orc culture. Perhaps it explains the origins of a newly discovered race of dragon men or guards the gate to the City of the Dead.

Of course, the codex might not be named after a British nobleman, but given that “garnet” is a semi-precious stone, it still could be a family name of some distinction. Indeed, rather than being named after the discoverer, the *Garnet Codex* could have gotten its name because the images are found carved into a wall of solid garnet.

The Air of Mystery: The best thing about the *Garnet Codex*, or any other inexplicable relic from the past, is that it can be imbued with whatever meaning best suits the needs of your campaign and characters. It is the overwhelming sense of awe and mystery that makes it alluring and the promise of it leading to riches and fame that will grab your players’ attention and propel your plots forward.

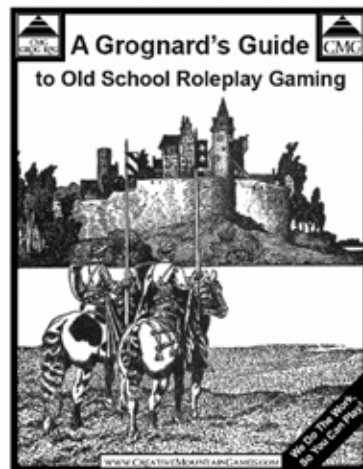


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The Plague Paradigm:

How Epidemic Disease Shapes a Campaign

by Derek Kagemann

Art by Jennifer Lynn Kagemann



The world's most popular role-playing game is inherently medieval in its sensibilities, and disease is a constant threat. When soldiers march to war, more of them will die from sickness than combat. Villagers don't drink purified water or use flush toilets. When chamberpots are emptied, out the window they go. Not only are there an abundance of disease-carrying vermin in a fantasy campaign, but heroes and peasants alike must also contend with the pestilences inflicted by dire rats, mummies, demons, and sorcerers. Indeed, all of our own world's ancient fears and misapprehensions of disease are embodied as real and present threats in a gritty campaign, and a few curative magics are not quite in the same league as modern medicine.

For an authentic campaign, disease must be given its proper place on the grand stage. Pandemic outbreaks span continents and have the capacity to annihilate entire populations. In the process, cultural norms are reinvented, economic conditions redefined, and communities displaced. Society is turned on its head.

And here's how it happens...

Epidemic Outbreak

A virulent disease emerges in a notoriously poor and violent dockside neighborhood of a major metropolitan city. Most area residents dismiss the disease as yet another malady peculiar to the half-orc population—an impoverished group occupying the lowest social strata. After all, diseases like cholera, dysentery, and smallpox are common enough, so the general populace doesn't

bat an eye at the emergence of another.

The local government is willing to let the outbreak run its course so long as it doesn't spread beyond the borders of the afflicted area. As far as they are secretly concerned, the disease is doing the city a service by winnowing out an overpopulated criminal area (and killing off those despicable, disease-ridden half-orcs). A coordinated response would require the channeling of valuable resources away from other areas of statecraft. Let's keep in mind that there are wars to fund, roads to build, fleets to manage, and peasants to feed.

The disease spreads at an exponential rate, but the majority of the population remains blissfully unaware of the burgeoning epidemic. Cities are by no means a unified entity. They are compartmentalized into relatively isolated neighborhoods, each supported by a full range of shops and services. These social islands are further insulated by the dictates of race, social class, and economics.

Most city-dwellers live without ever straying more than a few hundred feet from their home. Without newspapers or posted bills of mortality to accurately report events on a city-wide scale, residents remain ignorant of most happenings outside of their immediate area. Rumors and hearsay trickle through the city, but those frightening exaggerations of impending doom are commonplace and easily dismissed.

The contagion spreads rapidly to adjoining quarters of the city. Eventually, the extraordinary number of fatalities becomes noticeable even to the common folk. Worse still, the disease emerges in areas of the city far removed

from the initial outbreak. Panic sets in immediately as powerful nobles succumb to what was once thought to be a disease of peasants and beggars. Rich merchants and aristocrats flee from the city, occasionally escaping the plague but more often delivering it with them to a new locale.

The Role of the Temple

So why don't the clerics just step in and heal everyone? For starters, let's keep in mind that the church has its own politics and objectives. The interests of the dominant faith more often than not coincide with those of the state, but the primary function of any temple is to serve and enforce the interests of a specific deity. These objectives can and will diverge from the cause of the common good, and a cleric who fails to act in accordance with the tenets of his faith will ultimately be stripped of his standing and spell-casting abilities.

Additionally, clerics powerful enough to cure disease typically form the administrative structure of the church. Like state authorities, they have duties and responsibilities that often preclude them from direct ministrations. The prices charged for high-level clerical services offset the great inconvenience of an upper echelon official stepping away from pressing duties.

During a crisis, business must go on as normal or the temple structure will begin to deteriorate. The prevalence of one illness will not preclude the persistent occurrences of endemic maladies and recurrent clientele, who will continue to demand temple resources. The patrician of the church must understand these factors and mete out the

church's resources accordingly.

More to the point, temples are not pay and pray entities. They are built with very specific priorities in mind. These tenets do not necessarily include an automatic "save the world" principle. What does the God of Magic care of plagues? While a proven believer might be given consideration during a time of need, a temple would extend little courtesy to an adherent of a competing sect. Resources must be rationed for the survival of the church.

Though competition for adherents exists among the different faiths, especially in a world where the power of a deity waxes and wanes according to the size of its following, not every person is a pious one. There will always be those who fail to respond to the call for healing, and among them, plague will continue to fester. Even in the face of an organized temple response, epidemic diseases will infect new hosts faster than existing hosts can be cured.

Also, magical cures by no means impart immunity against disease. Natural recovery strengthens the body's immune system and imparts a strong resistance against future infection. Those cured by way of clerical intervention have no such defense against the microbial hotbed festering outside the temple doors.

Pandemic Escalation

While city authorities deliberate, the disease emerges within the surrounding rural thorps and hamlets where there is insufficient clerical presence to implement a cure. Seeking relief, wagonloads of plague victims stream toward the central city, many dying before they ever reach help. Unwilling to allow the disease-ridden refugees entry into the city, the guard turn them away at the gate.

The local rulers begin to sweat. No longer confined to the city's undesirables, the ravages of sickness are undermining the area's labor force and food supply. Inflated bread prices will quickly lead to riots. The city could very well shut down if the plague is not contained.

The local lord will ready his army, and carefully assess the available food supplies. Riders secure villages not yet contaminated by plague. Their reports suggest mass hysteria, food hoarding, and witch hunts as villagers search for scapegoats to blame. Plague-carrying undead walk openly in the worst-affected areas, and destroying them will require the diversion of even more clerical resources, for fear of the undead overrunning the living. Certainly far too many bodies lie in the fields without proper burial already.

In response to the panic and slow collapse, the pious priests of the Sun God offer their services freely to the afflicted. Within hours, the temple is flooded with the sick, driving away all other visitors. Church revenue plummets while the remaining funds are rapidly depleted paying panic prices for healing herbs, clean linens, and burial shrouds. The clerics labor relentlessly to heal the masses but there are simply too many.

Exhausted, their scroll and potion reservoirs tapped, the initial momentum of their work subsides. Worse, clerics begin to fall ill, and the temple itself becomes a hotbed of infection. Wild rumors begin to spread. There is talk that the church will soon charge outrageous prices for its services, that only a select few will continue to be healed—even that the temple is responsible for the sickness.

The enemies of the Sun God are more than happy to exacerbate matters. They sow discord and embellish idle gossip into powerful accusations. The next day, a mob arrives and burns the temple to the ground. Clerics of the God of the Sun ministering to the sick on the streets are openly assaulted. Fearing the mob, the other temples shut their doors and prepare for the worst.

Other workers of divine magic are sequestered as auguries are cast to divine the cause of the disease or its cure. Clerical resources are stretched to their breaking point, and mundane healers find their arts are woefully inadequate. Many patients die long before any suit-



able cures can be concocted.

The plague expands. People lose faith in the benevolence of the gods, and cults celebrating death and plague emerge overnight, some backed by formidable powers. Followers of the God of the Dead walk the streets, preaching the divine purity of death, and agents of the Goddess of Night and Magic report the city's growing weakness back to their dark mistress.

Signs of the End

The pandemic spreads well beyond the borders of any single kingdom, afflicting countless towns and cities. Rulers implement increasingly draconian measures to contain the spread of disease as starvation and lawlessness tear the realm apart.

For example, families suspected of harboring plague are boarded up within their homes. Corpses are burned or interred in mass graves, piled high with lime. Fuming braziers are left to burn in the streets in the hopes that the stench of coal and brimstone will cleanse the air of the offending miasma. Dogs and other animals suspected of carrying the plague are killed en masse, and adventuring groups are paid exorbitant fees to eliminate larger disease-bearing menaces.

Trade dwindles. Import drops sharply as trade partners prove unwilling to risk exposure, and trade vessels suspected of harboring plague are turned away at every port. In most cases, such

embargoes are enacted too late and the disease finds a fresh foothold in new and distant cities.

Tribes of demihumans and monsters infringe on human settlements as the outer reaches of civilization deteriorate. Though many are immune to the disease, a few are natural reservoirs for future outbreaks, able to carry and transmit the disease without suffering any ill effects. The military is spread far too thin to combat incursions by such opportunistic creatures. Decimated by disease, the remnants of the army are occupied containing riots, enforcing order, and holding vital positions and supply lines.

A power vacuum emerges, and the weakened kingdom is ripe for invasion by forces previously too weak to contest the area. Though the conquering armies face little resistance, they provide a veritable smorgasbord of fresh hosts for the disease. The occupying forces loot and pillage, seizing infected slaves and tainted goods. Casualties to the disease mount at a staggering

rate. Ultimately, the invading armies are forced to withdraw back to their homelands—bringing along their sick and wounded.

Then, just as suddenly as it emerged, the pandemic dies away. A few areas remain relatively unscathed, while other regions are barren of life—the disease burned through every available host. Powerful families and societal elites have been scattered to the winds, making room for new factions. Wealth sees a grand redistribution. Demand for workers skyrockets in the cities, drawing in poor peasants from the surrounding countryside and shaping them into the next generation of skilled artisans.

With their faith in the old ways challenged, the people look for new hopes and ideas to guide them. Temples that weathered the crisis by walking that fine line of compassion and restraint begin to emerge as the dominant religions. At the same time, there is an emergence of morbidity, a sense of familiarity with death that verges on

fatalism. This sensibility is reflected in the culture and its expressions of art. Ornate chandeliers and other decorations are crafted from human bones. These discomfiting sights mirror the unease of the survivors who appropriate the homes and belongings of the recently dead.

Opportunities abound in the pandemic's wake. The kingdom is rife with instability as power structures fall back into place. Areas that were once civilized and largely explored are now abandoned with new, unknown obstacles. Evil entities and organizations that have had an opportunity to grow and run rampant must again be reined in. The ruling government has learned its lesson—at least for the time being—and is eager to restore the kingdom's borders and tamp any lingering bastions of disease.

Though the campaign map may look familiar, the landscape is forever changed.

Adventurers wanted.



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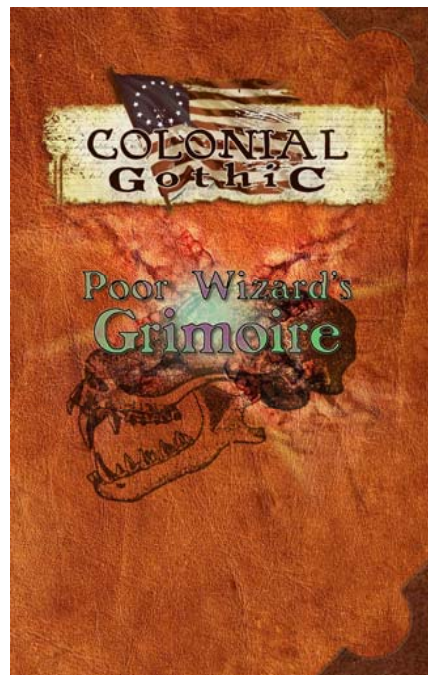
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A Guide to Dwarven Airships

by Ben McFarland

Art by Darren Calvert

Maps by Sean Macdonald

Born by chance in the laboratory of a dwarven alchemist, the liftgas airships became an icon of the race's ingenuity and innovation. First discovered by Klaudus Erdogant as he tested alchemical creations, the airship would prove to be both his greatest achievement and his ultimate downfall. While working with a waxy, greasy-grey mineral, he found that boiling water slowly dissolved it into a lye-like paste and released large amounts of a gas that was both flammable and lighter than air.

Despite its apparent potential as a weapon, the gas proved difficult to transport and weaponize effectively. With a little experimentation, however, Klaudus discovered that, by filling treated silk balloons, he could lift materials into the sky without the use of arcane energies and leave them aloft for hours or days.

Klaudus' first airships were simple floating laboratory toys, but he soon built larger, single-dwarf vehicles. A set of black-painted single- and two-dwarf balloons were later used in the Siege of Latorne to lift an entire dwarven engineering company onto the city gate, resulting in the lowering of the drawbridge and the infiltration of the hard-bitten Ironcrag Exiles mercenary company into the streets of Latorne. The newfound possibility of a stealthy form of transport led to further experiments.

Unfortunately, Klaudus was a better alchemist than an airship engineer or pilot, and he died in a burning crash while demonstrating a new prototype to his clan patriarchs and potential sponsors. Despite the tragedy, the

patriarchs saw the invention's utility to simplify reconnaissance in the steep hills and mountainous terrain of their holdings and to save time carrying loads up and down the steepest passes. They demanded additional research. At the Archpatriarch's request, Erdogant's widow sold his notes to Onderval Templeforge, a renowned dwarven engineer, who reworked the airship designs, integrating steam-powered propellers. Templeforge collaborated with master alchemists, developing special treatments that made the airships' bladders fire resistant and frames strong, sleek, and lightweight. The industry flourished; the dwarves had found an appealing and elegant method for patrolling their lands and transporting goods to distant markets while avoiding brigands.

After hundreds of tests, a few more accidents, and careful redesigning, the rather distinctive liftgas merchant marine air corps (or LMMAC) took to the skies.

Airship Crews

Airship captains are fighters, marshals, experts, and occasionally bards. The qualities needed to command a crew through a thunderstorm more than 1000 feet off the ground while keeping on course and then negotiate a profitable sale at the port of call are uncommon and demand both a forceful personality and a variety of talents.

An airship-mage, or aeromancer, is a master of utility spells with a specialized repertoire of combat magic. Shunning electrical and fire-based spells, they prefer force-based evocations, enchantments, necromantic effects,



and absolute control over the winds and weather.

An airship-mage's spell lists often include:

1st Level: *color spray, feather fall, grease, magic missile, sleep*

2nd Level: *gust of wind, pyrotechnics, scare, touch of idiocy*

3rd Level: *deep slumber, greater feather fall, haste, stinking cloud, windwall*

4th Level: *black tentacles, mass reduce person, shout, solid fog*

5th Level: *cloudkill, cone of cold, fabricate, symbol of pain, wall of force*

6th+ Level: *control weather, symbol of fear, mass hold person, reverse gravity*

Greater Feather Fall

Transmutation

Level Bard 3, Sor/Wiz 3

Components V

Casting Time 1 immediate action

Range Long (400 ft. + 40 ft. level)

Target one living creature or object/level, no two more than 50 ft. apart.

Duration special, see text

Saving Throw Will, harmless.

Spell Resistance yes (harmless)

Specially designed to save airship crews and cargo in emergencies, this spell allows creatures and objects to fall normally until they are within 300 feet of the ground, at which point the spell begins to act in all respects as *feather fall*—each target gently floating 60 feet per round per level.

Crewmembers are a strange mix of commoners, experts, fighters, and rogues, along with the odd bard or traveling priest. Lightly armored, wear-

Table 1: Airship Maneuvers

Maneuver	Weather	DC	Retry?	Failed Result
Landing or Unusual	—	10	Sometimes	Possible damage
Landing or Unusual	High Winds	+3 per category above moderate	If failed by four or less	4d10 hp damage* per category
Landing or Unusual	Storm	+10	If failed by four or less	6d10 hp damage to hull
Careful Navigation	—	+1 per 10 ft. less than 2x ship width	No	Possible damage
Damaged	—	+1 per 10% damage	If failed by four or less	Possible damage

ing goggles and climbing harnesses, they favor repeating crossbows—less reloading reduces accidents when repelling pirates or hungry creatures.

Crews form tight-knit social groups, creating a very loyal extended surrogate family. Some rarely visit “dirtside” at all, spending literally years aloft or alighting only on mountain peaks in the Ironcrags and other dwarven holdings. Conservative dwarves dislike these self-imposed exiles, calling them “stoneless.”

Skills of the Air

Many nautical skills are important on an airship, such as Balance, Climb, and Use Rope. Profession (airship pilot) is unique to airships.

Airship pilots use the Profession (airship pilot) skill to handle difficult situations. This skill covers landing in difficult weather, navigating tight spaces, and controlling a damaged dirigible. Five ranks of the Knowledge (nature) or Survival skill provides a +2 synergy bonus to Profession (airship pilot) checks.

*If maximum damage on a die is rolled, subtract 1 and roll again, adding to the result. This damage is in addition to any from a failed check and is inflicted to the central portion surrounding the gas bladders. Unusual movement includes docking with a tower or another airship while aloft, dragging ropes close to rooftops, or hovering over a position in strong winds. Careful navigation refers to flying between towers or down nar-

row canyons. When the space being traversed is less than twice the width of the airship, the pilot makes a check for careful navigation.

Profession (airship pilot) checks failed by four or less may be retried; the DC for each retry is increased by 3. A second failure indicates half movement rate and no possible turning. A check failed by five or more requires a second check at the same DC. Subtract this second result from the DC and multiply it by 10 to indicate the total hit point damage inflicted as the vessel crashes. A negative result indicates the pilot aborted the maneuver before damaging the airship. The pilot must move the vessel for 5 rounds before trying again.

For instance, Ludor attempts to land *Die Fledermaus*, a Colossal airship, in a thunderstorm with moderate winds; he must make a DC 20 Profession (airship pilot) check. He gets a 14, failing. He makes a second check to determine any damage. This roll is a 7, causing 130 points of damage and increasing DCs by +1 until repaired.

Feats

Just as the gear of airship crews is relatively rare dirtside, so are the feats of the better pilots.

Instinctive Pilot

Prerequisite Skill Focus (Profession (airship pilot))

Benefit You gain a +3 competence bonus to Profession (airship pilot) checks.

Damn the Ballistae

Prerequisite Skill Focus (Profession (airship pilot))

Benefit You can use your airship as a weapon, ramming a stationary object without a Profession (airship pilot) check and attempting to ram an enemy airship with an opposed Profession (airship pilot) check. You must be traveling twice as fast as your target, or both airships must be traveling towards one another. If you win, your airship collides with the opponent’s craft. Such a crash damages both crafts (or craft and object) at 1d10 points of damage per 5 mph of movement: for example, an airship traveling 60 mph would cause 12d10 damage to both itself and its target.

Normal Ramming a stationary object is considered unusual movement, and ramming a moving, piloted, functional airship is not possible.

Lucky and Good

Prerequisite Instinctive Pilot

Benefit When you fail a Profession (airship pilot) check, you may immediately retry. You may use this benefit only once per check and must take the second result, regardless of its success or failure.

Aeronautical Gear

Airship crews are an inventive lot by necessity, and have their own preferred ways of fighting the cold of altitude and the risks of speedy flight far above Mother Earth.

Templeforge’s Codex of Aeromantic

Ingenuity: Considered the seminal work on airship design, an engineer or pilot referencing this tome for 10 minutes in a non-combat situation, while piloting, repairing or constructing an airship receives a +3 competence bonus to the next piloting or repair check; Cost: 1,500 gp.

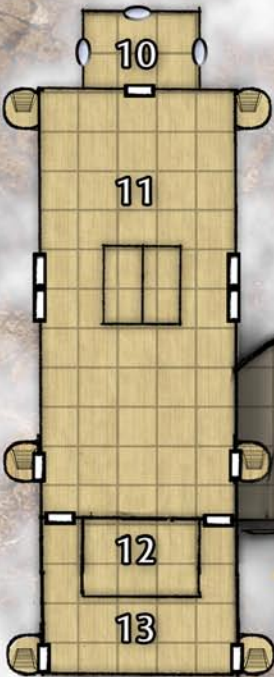
Folding Ballista: These clever contraptions fold up into a bundle about 15 inches around and six feet long. Unfolded and locked into place in two

Dwarven Airships

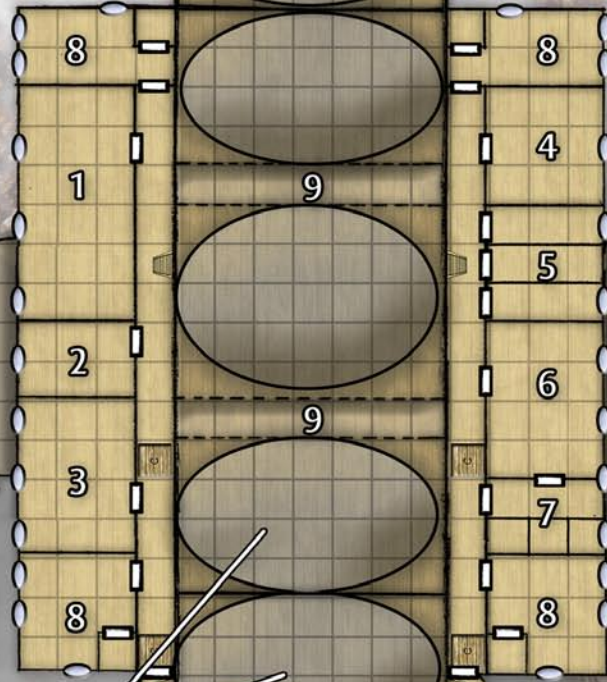
The Dragon



Bottom Deck



Port Deck

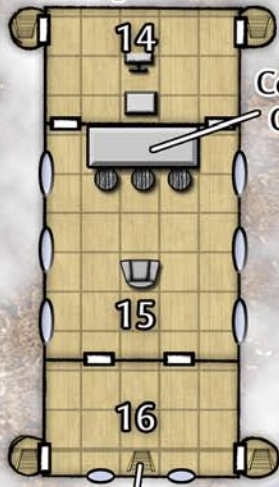


Central Section

Starboard Deck



Top Deck



Command Controls

Gas Bladders

Crow's Nest

Guidewire

Entry Hatch

Spool

Ladder

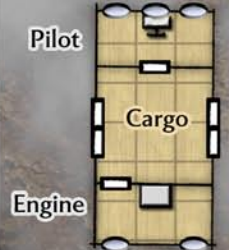
Top Deck Side View

Other Airships

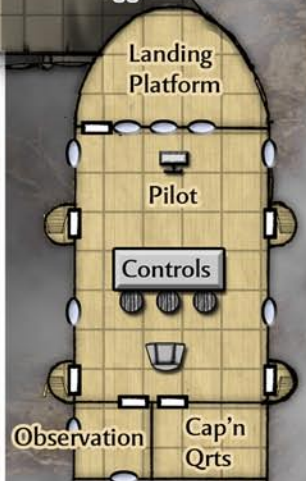
Damselfly Lower Deck



Dragonfly Lower Deck



Drake Upper Deck



Drake Lower Deck



Dragon Key

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Crew Quarters | 7. Galley | 13. Engine Room |
| 2. Mage Quarters | 8. Artillery Room | 14. Navigation |
| 3. Captain's Quarters | 9. Service Tunnel | 15. Bridge |
| 4. Workshop | 10. Observation Room | 16. Transit Hall |
| 5. Passenger Quarters | 11. Cargo Bay | |
| 6. Dining Hall | 12. Power Plant | |

1 square = 5 ft.

Using Airships in your Campaign

Airships stretch your campaign to strange locales and interesting settings without having to introduce magical organizations. Created by craftsmen, maintained by engineers, and piloted by specialists, they're not magical, allowing any culture to support them.

Airships add another possibility for pirates, travel, new arrivals, and rare products. Their high speeds mean less time traveling, and their three-dimensional movement makes the whole world their port-of-call.

If airships are rare, then travel onboard becomes a novelty, adding to a story's distinctiveness. If they're commonplace, players might plan for them by designing characters to utilize them and seeking them out; this can drive stories and add to the overall sense of adventure.

The airships might be a nascent empire's weapon of conquest or the innovation that drives a trading company to domination and colonization. Regardless, the addition of airships provides an exotic accent that keeps your players hungering for more.

rounds, their excellent gearwork eliminates the penalty for Medium creatures when aiming and reduces a Small creature's penalty to -2. Their range is unchanged from a standard ballista, but they reload in a single full-round action; Cost: 800 gp.

Dragon's Breath Shot: A spear with a hardened ceramic head, this ballista ammunition explodes with an alchemist's fire charge upon impact—inflicting a ballista's usual 3d8 damage plus an additional 2d6 fire. Creatures within five feet of the target are splashed for 1d4 fire damage. If used as a melee weapon, it bursts and is consumed on the first hit, doing 1d6 plus 2d6 fire to the target and 2d6 fire to the wielder. Cost: 150 gp.

Demon's Blood Shot: Another spear with a hardened ceramic head, this ballista ammunition bursts with a highly corrosive acid upon impact—inflicting a ballista's usual 3d8 damage plus an additional 1d6 acid for 2 rounds. Creatures within five feet of the target are splashed for 1 point of acid damage. If

used as a melee weapon, it bursts and is consumed on the first hit, doing 1d6 plus 1d6 acid to the target and 1d6 acid to the wielder. Cost: 150 gp.

Feathervest: This is a fine vest of heavy silk bearing the emblem of a trading company or noble on the back, such as crossed hammers or a dragon. It feels light and soft to the touch, as if it were made of downy feathers. If dropped, it floats gently to the floor. Crews often have someone wearing one of these items.

While worn, the vest is activated by a mental command and once per day, the wearer may cast *greater feather fall*. Its power is considered cast by the wearer. Activating the power is an immediate action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Moderate Transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, greater feather-fall; Cost 5,400gp.

Stormsheen Goggles: These heavy mirrored goggles help the wearer maintain his vision despite blurring rain and flashing lightning. Rain does not impair his vision, and he receives a +2 bonus versus any gaze attack or attempt to blind him. Cost 150 gp.

Rimebane Jacket: This heavy, hooded leather coat is fur lined and well padded, providing its wearer with Resist Cold/5, +3 bonus to any Fortitude save against cold weather effects, and an Armor bonus of +3. It has a maximum Dex bonus of +3, with an armor check penalty of -2, and a spell failure of 15%. Cost 250 gp.

Safety Harness: Thick leather webbing that straps over the shoulders, around the torso, and between the legs, this harness has a special locking clip that prevents sudden falls. It can also be held open with a Use Rope check (DC 15), or Strength Check (DC 20) to allow the wearer to mimic a monk's slow fall ability. An check must be made every 50 feet; failure indicates that the wearer has lost control and falls normally. The harness provides a

+2 bonus to climbing checks involving an unknotted rope. Cost: 25gp.

The Templeforge Cloud-dragon

The Dragon-class ships are the largest dwarven airships currently known; the *Templeforge Cloud-dragon* is an exemplar of the type.

All airships are large but relatively delicate. For simplicity's sake, their weight is given as two numbers, one for the actual mass before any minimal liftgas is pumped into the air bladders (which dwarven airship pilots sometimes call the cartage weight), the other the effective tonnage when trying to move the airship by magic or physical means through the air. Its buoyancy drops below zero, of course to allow it to soar into the sky.

Tonnage 20 (75 without liftgas)
Size 175 ft. wide (50 ft. of wings on either side, 75 ft. of compartments), 60 ft. tall (10 ft. for top section, 35 ft. for central bladder, 15 ft. for bottom deck), 165 ft. long
Maneuverability clumsy (one 45 ° turn per double move), and can hover
Engine Hit Points 50; **Hardness** 10
Maximum Acceleration 20 mph, 200 ft./round
Top Speed 60 mph, 500 ft./round
24-Hour Travel Distance 1,440 miles
Maximum Altitude 12,000 ft.

Each 5 ft. square section of the outer shell and compartments has the Hull Point values (the hp total is for the whole ship). While destroying the crew compartments is possible, destroying one such section in the central portion encasing the gas bladders is enough to make the entire shell collapse.

Hull Type alchemically treated wood
hp 2,250; **Hull Points** 225;
Hardness 7; **Resist** fire/5
AC 8; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** - (object)
Cargo Space 7 tons; **Crew** 50;
Officers 6
Hull Craft DC 20; **Engine Craft** DC 25; **Total Cost** 285,000 gp
Any dwarven airship can be roughly

divided into a top, middle, and bottom section, each of which serves a particular role in buoyancy, propulsion, and landing. The crew quarters and defenses are in the port and starboard compartments.

Bottom Section

A dirigible is often specialized for the region it frequents, with a boat keel for river landings, skis for ice or sand, and perhaps large runners, or wheels for open ground. Even enchanted clawed feet are possible, to grip battlements or enormous tree perches.

Cargo Bay This room is full of crates, barrels, and bales, all secured with netting. There are pulleys, ropes, and small cranes for manipulating cargo. Enough minerals for 64 hours of constant flight are stored here, approximately one ton.

Engine Room Six small boilers produce the steaming water and the liftgas mineral used to create the airship's lift. The airship engineers usually live

alongside their engines, and they can tell the strain placed on them by the sound and smell of their steam. Most engine rooms contain enough minerals for 32 hours of constant flight.

Rich captains use magic or a reservoir of liftgas to heat the water; others use more dangerous and heavier oil- or coal-fueled boilers; and the poorest resort to wood stoves. If damaged for 15 hit points and left unattended for 20 rounds, or reduced to 0 hp, a boiler explodes for 10d10 fire damage in a 20-foot radius. A Disable Device check (DC 20 + damage inflicted) prevents this malfunction.

Observation Room Spotters in this room watch in front of and below the airship. A long speaking tube permits communication with the bridge.

Central Section

Encased in the specially treated and lacquered wood of the outer shell, this section is the bulk of the airship and

the portion that allows it to fly.

Service Passages These short, 4-foot round tunnels squeeze between the gas bladders, permitting crewmembers to quickly move between the port and starboard compartments. They are only used in emergencies. Normally, crew and passengers use the ladders to ascend to the bridge and drop back down.

Gas Bladder These large, specially treated, flame-resistant bladders are fashioned of canvas, hide, or silk (Resist fire/5, Hardness 3, 15 hp), and a typical airship has seven such bladders, each isolated from the rest.

To launch an airship, a complex series of pipes from the engine room fills each bladder in turn with the gas that allows the airship to fly; launching from a dead stop takes at least 10 rounds and up to twice that time if the boilers are cold. Special vents release the gas to permit the airship to return to earth, descending as fast as 200 ft.

10x10 Toon

by Stan!



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Next Issue

KOBOLD QUARTERLY brings you:

Legends of the Golem

Jewish mysticism and legends help us (ahem) flesh out the golem. We have high hopes for this one.

Medieval Medicine

What if cure light wounds and healing surges were not the typical wham-bam-you're-ready-to-go-another-round? Some intriguing insights into magical healing and the weird things that used to pass for medicine.

Plus, an ecology article, possibly some warlock alternate class features, and a little clockwork magic, stolen from the *Tales of Zobeck* project. Maybe. If you ask nicely.

Not to mention an interview with R. A. Salvatore, gamer and author, and his son.



Liftgas Mineral

Mined in relatively few clan warrens, the liftgas mineral is rare, a crumbly grey stone that is easy to work but tough to find. It costs about 650 gp per ton. This mineral varies in quality: about 1 in 10 deposits are high-grade liftgas ore known to be 150% effective, while a poor vein (about a third of all deposits) might provide half the lift.

An Appraise check (DC 15) properly identifies the quality of a lot.

per round.

If damaged by fire, each gas bladder explodes in a 20-foot radius for 10d6 damage. Every bladder lost after the second increases the ship's effective tonnage by 11. A liftgas airship weighing more than 45 tons cannot fly until its bladders are repaired.

Port Section

Both port and starboard sides are connected to the bottom and top sections by cage-enclosed ladders that end at hatches. A braided cable allows climbers to attach their climbing harness for safety.

Crew Quarters This is a simple hall with triple-stacked hammocks.

Captain's Quarters A tube here permits communication to the bridge.

Airship Mage Quarters The only other private quarters in this section. Most captains won't enter uninvited.

Artillery Emplacement These rooms contain lockers for ballistae and boarding weapons. In peaceful lands, most of the ballistae are folded up and stored for easy deployment.

Ballast Storage Stone cylinders line the inner corner of the central corridors of both the Port and Starboard sections. In case of emergency, they are a proper size and shape to be dumped out a porthole and could act as improvised artillery.

Starboard Section

This and the port section could easily trade positions; the occupied side is simply a matter of taste and superstition for the Captain.

Additional Cabins Three small cabins hold two to three passengers or officers in very close, but private, quarters.

Workshop New and repaired parts are fabricated here while underway. Masterwork tools are usually available.

Kitchen This small galley facility is very often just as hot as the engine room and much more cramped.

Artillery Emplacement As on port side.

Top Section

Housing the bridge and crow's nest, the top section allows for fantastic views of the skies and distant terrain. Some larger airships have landing platforms for creatures or single-person craft atop the gas bladders. Others commonly use this deck for docking with other airships in midair.

The bridge makes a prime target for boarders and pirates seeking easy access to the Captain and the ship's rudder and controls. The ballistae in the forward and rear compartments are folded and stored unless trouble is expected.

Bridge The captain works at the nerve center of the ship, issuing orders for movement and communicating with vital compartments using a command station of labeled tubes. Two dedicated crewman have the task of relaying orders through the tubes connected to

More Airships!

There wasn't room for all these massive behemoths in this issue, so we took a few of the smaller airships (the Damsel and Drake shown on the maps) and placed them on the koboldquarterly.com Web site.

Come take a look, and expand your fleet!

the engine room and the observation room. a third crewman communicates to all other connected compartments.

The navigator controls the rudders and propeller speeds from his wheels in the forward compartment. The Captain has a chair here to observe, but many prefer to pace the deck.

Crow's Nest This strange contraption is a cage-enclosed ladder on a spinning joint. It can turn 180 degrees, allowing the crewman in the observation platform at its end to have a view unhindered by the bulk of the airship's frame. The lookout stationed here has a speaking tube connecting to the bridge, but must shout to be heard.

The 60 mph winds in the crow's nest mean that protective gear is required; even dwarves find the temperature and wind painful after a few hours. Characters in the crow's nest must make a Fortitude check every 10 minutes, (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or suffer 1d6 nonlethal cold damage. Those wearing winter gear or a Rimebane Jacket make the check once an hour.

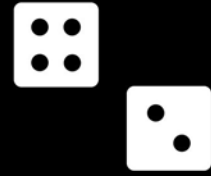
Story Seeds

The Silk Wind Some speak of a high-altitude current that whisks an airship to distant cities where dwarven craftsmanship is easily traded for fine bolts of luxurious silken cloth. The captain that charted such a current could quickly make a fortune, swiftly outpacing his competitors. He might also find himself hosting a number of unwelcome boarding parties, as rivals seek to steal his newfound route. Will the party defend the captain or try to acquire the information?

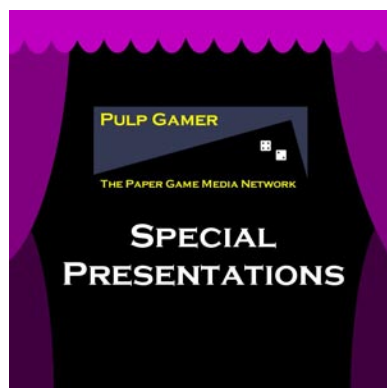
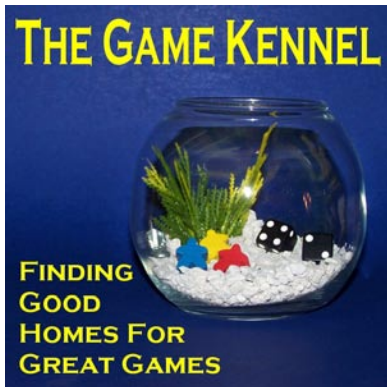
The Cloudrace Each year the clans gather for the Cloudrace, a great race to determine the best airship pilot and the best airship design. Prizes are rich, competition is fierce, and only the greatest or the most underhanded win. Guile is valued as much as innovation. Can the party keep their vessel safe while learning what skullduggery is afoot and maybe pick up a few new tricks along the way?



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The Courtesans of Zobeck

By Wolfgang Baur

Though it might seem to some visitors that commerce and clockwork are the principle pastimes of the people of Zobeck, their hearts are rather more passionate than one might suppose. Murder, cults, and even lust occupy them just as much as their letters of credit and bills of lading. Indeed, trade and lust are often intertwined, as traffic in flesh and marriage into wealth are common.

For every wealthy, ambitious merchant prince, there may be a beautiful young gutter princess, seeking to ensnare him with her wiles. The search for pleasure drives the engines of Zobeck in rather a different direction than the temple or the counting house.

The Red Houses

The courtesans of Zobeck are not the whores of Harkesh or the crude slatterns of Morgau. Yes, some do sell themselves on the street in Lower Zobeck, but the courtesans are intriguers who must be won fairly, with gifts, wits, and sometimes, with blood.

The courtesans generally work from one of the Red Houses, places along the Street of Joy near the Temple of Lada and the Vineyard District. There they ply their trade largely by invitation; they open their homes for feasts of intrigue where the finest music play, sung by castrati singers from Remulus and played by musicians from the Porte of Elements. The largest of these houses are the Red Faun and the Lusty Mermaid, though many smaller ones offer much finer pleasures, at a much higher price.

The rumors in the street always speak of courtesan's parties as events of deep debauchery and gluttony and wild excess, and that may be true of some. But a courtesan has no reason to take a drunkard or a dull man into her bed. So generally, she doesn't.

Guardians

The secret of the courtesans is twofold: the merchant families and the sons of the Praetors and Consuls must be kept occupied, and in the cold calculus of a merchant's heart, it is better for them to spend their time fighting over a few worthy companions than bedding every tavern slut. Young men need prizes to win, and need to be guided by their elders in what constitutes a worthy mistress.

So the young blades of the city are encouraged to find a mistress and keep her, as a sign of status and their own virility. The most popular courtesans may have invitations to all the great houses, and may receive callers from bitter mercantile rivals. Women able to keep their suitors interested are capable of much, in intrigue, in politicking, and in the act of love. Such women are worth winning, especially when doing so requires more than money. It requires courage.

Proper Dueling

A few new courtesans arrive in Zobeck's heavens each year, announcing themselves at the Winter Festival or the Green God's Fest in the spring. Each year, just as many seem to retire or even marry into wealth, meaning that the supply of available, educated, stunningly beautiful courtesans is always smaller than the demand from rich, ambitious, and sometimes hot-headed young men.

So, the men ply their suits with gifts of clockwork birds, with scented oils and elaborate silks from Sikkim or enchanted, numinous pearls from the Inner Sea. And if that does not yield the result they wish, they challenge the honor of another.

And yet proper dueling in Zobeck, where a courtesan is the subject of



dispute, does not leave the woman on the sidelines, as is sometimes the case. Instead, she has the right to turn a challenger away.

A courtesan may ask her prince to decline a duel if she is truly content (or finds the challenger unworthy), or she may ask him to accept duel after duel if her lover has neglected her. The man placed in such straights must either defend his name constantly. Sooner or later, his luck runs out or he seeks another.

As a result, the men of Zobeck are quite devoted to their mistresses.

Courtesans and Consuls

The work is lucrative. Indeed, one courtesan of Arbonesse found it worth her while to take up a courtesan's fan and silks for more than a century, serving three generations of House Slygass, and amassing enough wealth of her own, it is said, to buy herself a company of Rothenian hussars and a castle to lodge them in.

The consuls of the city are expected to keep a courtesan, and only the kobold consuls flout this tradition (kobold mating customs are a source of great disinterest to the rest of the city, who Do Not Wish to Know). The consuls' choices are debated on their merits, and a poor choice or a failure to value a courtesan highly can reduce a consul's standing among his peers. Female consuls are, perhaps strangely, expected to acquire a consort or a courtesan as well, though some of these are advisors first, lovers second.



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